STARS STRIPES.

Texas looking for respect in Rose Bowl



'We're so lucky,' say airman, wife caught in tsunami



Jerry Orbach of TV's 'Law & Order' dead at 69

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Volume 2, No. 263 © SS 2004 MIDEAST EDITION

Megan Shelby and Airman 1st Class Chad Shelby

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 30. 2004

False tip leads to deadly ambush; at least 29 killed

Rebels set off explosives after luring Iraqi police to house Page 3



A careful search doesn't always promise success for troops

Page 4

A young Iraqi child sleeps while Spc. Jesse LeBlanc searches for weapons in a house near Taji. LeBlanc is with the Black Sheep, soldiers of the 2nd Battalion, 156th Infantry, Regiment attached to the 1st Battalion, 69th Infantry, both National Guard units. U.S. troops have found that while some patrois can turn up weapons caches and insurgents, the searches can just as often prove futiless.

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News Tracker ... What's new with old news

States

Slain deer hunters case: A man accused of shooting six fellow deer hunters to death and wounding two others after being caught trespassing in the woods pleaded not guilty Wednesday.

Chai Soua Vang, 36, waived his right to a preliminary hearing and will stand trial on six counts of murder and three of attempted murder. A judge set a trial date of Sept. 12. Vang has suggested he acted in self-defense and feared for his life, telling investigators the victims fired a shot at him first

and berated him with racist slurs

N.Y. terror trial: A prosecutor told a federal jury Wednesday that the terrorism case against a Manhattan lawyer and two others was essentially about "a jailbreak" in which they helped an imprisoned terrorist feed

deadly messages to followers.



ney Andrew Dember in his closing argument painted all three defendants with the same brush, saying they let blind Egyptian Sheik Omar Abdel-Rahman communicate with over-

Abdel-Rahman communicate with overseas terrorists despite prison rules imposed to isolate him.

He asked the jury to convict attorney Lynne Stewart, U.S. postal employee Ahmed Abdel Sattar and Arabic translator Mohamed Yousry in a conspiracy to overcome the government's effort to silence the still "powerful and influential" sheik.

US Airways problems: US Airways is trying to recruit volunteers willing to work for free over the New Year's weekend at Philadelphia's airport in order to avoid a repeat of a Christmas fiasco that left the struggling airline with too few workers to fly its planes and process baggage. The request seeks workers only at Philadelphia.

While the volunteers will not be paid for return shifts, employees will be paid for regularly scheduled work, US Airways spokesman David Castelveter emphasized Wednesday. Company executives and managers would be taking part in the volunteer program, he said.

Marcos assests: A U.S. appeals court has upheld a lower court's ruling freezing assets of the late Philippine president Ferdinand Marcos that are being held in banks around the world.

In a decision issued Tuesday, the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in San Francisco ruled that the Philippine government, which wants the money, lacks the standing to challenge the freeze.

The order was first issued in 1986 and reaffirmed in 2008 by federal judge Manuel Real, who is presiding over a class-action lawsuit filed by more than 9,500 Filipinos who won a \$2 billion judgment against Marcos' estate in 1995. The award has grown to \$3.7 billion with interest, but none of the victims of the dictatorial Marcos regime have received any money.

Slain pregnant woman: A federal magistrate Tuesday appointed public defenders to represent Lisa M. Montgomery on a charge that she kidnapped a fetus from a pregnant woman and left the mother dead.

Montgomery, 36, made her first appearance in a federal courtroom downtown and spoke barely above a whisper as she answered a few questions from Chief U.S. Magistrate Judge John T. Maughmer.

Maughmer told Montgomery that he had asked two lawyers from the public defender's office to attend the hearing in anticipation that she may need court-appointed legal counsel. He told her he would not ask



Stone for Jesus' brother: The ossuary that reputedly held the bones of James, Jesus' brother, with an inscription in Aramaie "James, and Joseph, brother of Jesus" that was discovered in Israel appears to be forged, Israeli police indicted four antiquities collectors and dealers Wednesday, accusing them of running a sophisticated forgery ring that created a trove of fake biblical artifacts, including some hailed as among the most important archaeological policies are unconversed in the region.

for a plea on accusations against her but wanted to know if she was aware of the charges.

charges.
"Yes," she said quietly, acknowledging the accusations of the crime.

FBI counterterrorism chief: FBI Director Robert Mueller on Tuesday named Willie T. Hulon to lead the agency's counterterrorism division, the sixth person to hold the high-profile job since the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001

Hulon, a native of Memphis, Tenn, has been a senior counterterrorism official since April after a two-year stint as head of the FBF's field office in Detroit. Hulon was cleared in February of any wrongdoing after an internal investigation found that three Detroit area men had falsely accused him of leaking sensitive information to drug dealers.

War on terrorism

Chirac official probe: State prosecutors began a probe Wednesday into suspected wrongdoing by a mayerick lawmaker from President Jacques Chirac's party for his failed effort to free two French reporters taken hostage in Iraq, judicial officials said. The investigation of Didier Julia, a law-

The investigation of Didier Julia, a lawmaker from the conservative Union for a Popular Movement party, and two alleged associates centers on suspicions that they shared intelligence with a foreign power or group, the officials said on condition of ano-

iymity.

On Tuesday, investigators questioned Julia associates Philippe Brett and Philippe Evanno over their roles in the initiative. They were expected to be placed under investigation — one step short of being formally charged — the officials said.

World

Iran elections: Iran's biggest reform party has chosen a former Cabinet minister as its candidate in the upcoming elections for a successor to President Mohammad Khatami.

Mostafa Moin, a close Khatami ally and former science and technology minister, was the sole candidate of the Islamic Iran Participation Front, though other reformist groups may have their own candidates, party leader Saeed Shariati said Wednesserial Saeed Shariati said Saeed Shariati said Saeed Shariati said Saeed Shariati saeed Saeed Shariati said Saeed Shariati saeed Saeed Shariati saeed Saeed Shariati saeed Saeed Shariati

Moin officially accepted the nomination Monday.

Ukraine election dispute: Noisy, orange-clad opposition protesters on Wednes-

day blockaded Ukraine's government headquarters and prevented Prime Minister Viktor Yanukovych from convening a Cabinet session

Irina Lobanova, a spokeswoman for the Cabinet, said that the meeting would not be held as planned — a decision that prompted the protesters to start abandoning their barricade, which winning presidential candidate Viktor Yushchenko ordered Tuesdy night to keep up pressure on his rival, who has refused to concede.

Yanukovych also said Wednesday that he would not bow to opposition pressure and resign from his post.

Alghanistan reform: Alghanistan's new defense minister praised his wardord predecessor and pledged to work hard to create a professional national army seen as a key to establishing long-term stability in a nation still reliant on regional strongmen and international troops.

Abdul Rahim Wardak said Afghanistan's National Army, or ANA, needed educated and professional officers to eventually take over security of the vast mountainous coun-

Wardak said an ongoing drive to disarm private militias will be completed by March 2005, ahead of parliamentary elections scheduled for April.

Jiang government job: China's former President Jiang Zemin will step down from his last remaining government post in March, the official Xinhua News Agency reported Wednesday. Jiang, who holds the largely symbolic title

Jiang, who holds the largely symbolic title of chairman of the Central Military Commission of the People's Republic of China, has asked for permission to resign at the next meeting of the nation's legislature, the agency said.

Chavez criticism: An opposition leader accused Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez on Tuesday of attempting to turn the military into a tool of his left-leaning "revolution" and indoctrinating soldiers with anti-American sentiment.

The criticism by politician Gabriel Puerta Aponte came a day after Chavez declared the military an "essentially anti-imperialist force" and announced it would do away with soldiers' camouflage uniforms in favor of new olive green fatigues — similar to those wom by the Cuban military.

Chavez, a former paratroop commander, urged hundreds of troops in a speech late Monday to take up "an ideological offensive" including "anti-imperialist thought."

Stories and photos from wire services

At least 29 killed in ambush of Iraqi police

Insurgents' false tip leads security forces into deadly explosion

BY DUSAN STOJANOVIC

BAGHDAD — Insurgents lured police to a house in west Baghdad with an anonymous tip about a rebel hideout, then set off explosives, killing at least 29 people and wounding 18 in the latest in a series of deadly strikes against Iraqi security forces, police said Wednesday.

The explosion late Tuesday erupted from inside the house in the capital's Ghazaliya district as officers were about to enter, a local police official said. Ten neighboring houses collapsed from the blast and several residents were believed trapped under the rubble. Seven policemen were among the 29 dead.

The police official said the attack was "evidently an ambush" and that "massive amounts of explosives" were used. He said the explosion was apparently triggered by remote control.

The U.S. military said Wednesday 1,700 to 1,800 pounds of explosives appear to have been used. It added that American soldiers and Iraqi troops "worked together through the night to pull potential survivors from the

Brig. Gen. Jeffery Hammond, assistant commander of the 1st Cavalry Division that controls Baghdad, said the house that exploded was booby-trapped.

"The insurgent has no respect for life and an insurgent is anti-Islam," he said.

Hammond said U.S. troops and Iraqi security forces launched an offensive south of Baghdad on Wednesday with an aim of "capturing or detaining or killing insurgents."

Car bombs, ambushes and assassinations killed a total of at least 54 people in the Iraqi capital and across the volatile Sunni Triangle on Tuesday, including 31 policemen and a deputy provincial governor.

The attacks — including one in which 12 policemen had their throats slit — were the latest by insurgents targeting Iraqis working



An Iraqi woman stands outside houses destroyed in a blast in west Baghdad on Wednesday. Insurgents lured police to a house in west Baghdad with a tip about a hideout Tuesday night, then set off explosives, killing at least 29 people and wounding 18, police said Wednesday. Seven policemen were among the dead.

with the American military or the U.S.-backed government ahead of the Jan. 30 national elections

Hammond said the violence is expected to escalate before the ballot.

"We anticipate that the enemy will [continue with] attacks, intimidation, assassinations and other messages designed to destroy life in Baghdad," Hammond said, adding that Iraqi security forces will bear the brunt of providing security for the elections and that U.S. troops will back them up only if needed.

Iraqi forces launched a series of raids Wednesday in Baghdad's northern neighborhood of Azamiya and in the town of Mahmoudiya, just south of the capital, detaining at least 50 suspected insurgents — including several Syrians, the government said. The statement also said an Egyptian citizen, who was identified as Salah, was captured in Baghdad's central Karrada neighborhood. He had explosives and terrorist propaganda, it added. The U.S. military said in a statement Wednesday that the Iraqi security guards repelled three separate attacks by insurgents who tried to seize two police stations in Mosul, 225 miles northwest of Baghdad.

Also on Wednesday, a firefight erupted between U.S. troops and militants in the central Iraqi city of Samarra, witnesses said. There were no reports of casualties.

Shiite Muslims, who make up around 60 percent of Iraq's people, have been strong supporters of the elections, which they expect to reverse the longtime domination of Iraq's Sumi minority. The insurgency is believed to draw most of its support from Sumis, who provided much of Saddam Hussein's former Baath Party membership.

A Defense Ministry spokesman in Baghdad confirmed Wednesday that the Iraqi National Guard — a paramilitary internal security force that has borne the brunt of the anti-insurgency effort — will be merged with the regular armed forces.

U.S. deaths in Iraq

The Associated Press

As of Tuesday, at least 1,325 members of the U.S. military have died since the beginning of the Iraq war in March 2003, according to an Associated Press count. At least 1,040 died as a result of hostile action, the Defense Department said. The figures include three military civilians.

The AP count is one higher than the Defense Department's tally, last updated at 10 a.m. EST Tuesday.

The British military has reported 75 deaths; Italy, 19; Poland, 16; Spain, 11; Ukraine, nine; Bulgaria, seven; Slovakia, three; Estonia, Thailand and the Netherlands, two each, and Denmark, El Salvador, Hungary and Latvia one death each.

Since May 1, 2003, when President Bush declared that major combat operations in Iraq had ended, 1,187 U.S. miltary members have died, according to AP's count. That includes at least 931 deaths resulting from hostile action, according to the military's num-

The latest deaths reported by the military:

■ No deaths reported.

The latest identifications reported by the Defense Department:

Army Staff Sgt. Todd D. Olson, 36, Loyal, Wis; ide Monday after being injured Sunday by an explosive in Samarra, Iraq; assigned to the National Guard's 1st Battalion, 128th Infantry Regiment, Neillsville. Wis.

Government: Two top terror aides arrested

Saddam's trial set to start in early 2005

The Associated Press

BAGHDAD — Two senior aides of Iraq's most feared terrorist leader, Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, have been arrested, the deputy prime minister said Wednesday.

He also said Saddam Hussein will likely be tried early 2005.

Security forces arrested an al-Zarqawi aide identified as Abu Marwan in the northern city of Mosul, Barham Saleh said, adding that the man is believed to have been responsible for supplies and weapons. Another aide, Reda Bazyani, reportedly in charge of communications, was arrested in Baghdad.

Al-Zarqawi's group, which recently declared allegiance to Osama bin Laden, is believed to be responsible for numerous car bombings and beheadings of foreign hostages in Iraq.

Commenting on legal procedures against Saddam, Saleh said the former dictator's trial will likely start soon.

A special Iraqi tribunal haning the case of Saddam and 11 other members of his defunct regime did not say when the trials will start. Saddam and the other defendants appeared in court in Baghdad in July on charges of war crimes and genocide.

Saleh also condemned several terror attacks that killed at least 30 Iraqi officers Tuesday, killing at least 30 officers.

He said suspected terrorists had also been arrested in the southern city of Najaf, where a Dec. 19 suicide bombing killed about 50 people. Two of those arrested were from Saudi Arabia and one was from Morocco.

Bush denounces bin Laden's call for Iraqis to boycott January elections

BY DEB RIECHMANN

The Associated Press

CRAWFORD, Texas — President Bush on Wednesday denounced Osama bin Laden's call to boycott the Iraqi elections, saying that the balloting marks a crossroads for Iraq.

"The stakes are clear in this upcoming election," Bush told reporters at his Texas ranch. "It's the difference between the ability for individuals to express themselves and the willingness of an individual to try to impose his dark vision on the world, on the people of Iraq and elsewhere. It's very important that these elections pro-

In an audiotape broadcast Monday, bin Laden called for a boycott of the election and said the Iraqi vote — for a national assembly to write a constitution — is being held under an interim constitution "imposed by the American occupation" and "infidel" be-

ceed.'

cause it did not rely solely on Islamic law.

"Therefore, everyone who participates in this election will be considered infidels," bin Laden

The tape surfaced the same day the largest Sunni Muslim political party that had planned to take part announced its withdrawal, saying security was worsening and Iraqis did not understand the political process well enough to

Bush said bin Laden's vision stands in stark contrast to one viewed by a vast majority of Iraqis — that freedom of expression and the right to vote should prevail in Iraq.

"His vision of the world is where people don't participate in democracy," Bush said. "His vision of the world is where people kill innocent lives in order to affect their behavior and affect their way of living."

The president said he talked on

Tuesday with the president of the interim Iraqi government, Ghazi al-Yawer, a Sunni, who expressed concern about security in Mosul but said most people in Iraq—Sunni and Shia—want to cast bal-

lots.
"The task at hand is to provide as much security as possible for the election officials, as well as for the people inside cities like Mosul, to encourage them to express their will," Bush told reporters at an airplane hangar at his ranch.

Responding to complaints that U.S. troops are not adequately armed, Bush said his administration of armored Hunwees. He said other vehicles being used in the war that require different armament will be better armed by midsummer 2005.

"What I know is that the Defense Department is working expeditiously with private contractors and with our military to get these vehicles armed up," he said.





PHOTOS BY JOSEPH GIORDONO/Stars and Stripes

Above: Soldiers from the 1st Battalion, 69th Infantry catalog a weapons cache they seized near Taji, Iraq. Among the find were several automatic weapons, a rocket-propelled grenade launcher, a sniper ritle, pistols, dozens of full ammunition magazines and a few mortar sights. Left: Spc. Jesse LeBlanc of the Black Sheep searches for weapons in a farmbouse near Taji.

Patrols have varying degrees of success

Some Guard units find weapons near Taji

Members of the Black

Sheep — National

Guard units -

rolled back into

Camp Cooke with

four detainees and

weapons they seized

from a farmhouse

near Taji.

BY JOSEPH GIORDONO
Stars and Strings

TAJI, Iraq — In the past two days, two separate patrols from the 1st Battalion, 69th Infantry Regiment seized large weapons caches and detained 10 suspected insurements.

Over the same two days, several other patrols turned up nothing.

It's part of the day-to-day dichotomy of the U.S. military presence in Iraq: Days can go by without incident, and dozens of

searches and patrols amount only to a show of force and deterrence. Other times, targeted raids and search operations end with illegal weapons piled on tables and suspects on their way to detention

facilities.

Monday was an example of the latter.

Members of the Black Sheep — soldiers of the 2nd Battalion, 156th Infantry Regiment attached to the 1st Battalion, 69th Infantry, both National

Guard units — rolled back into Camp Cooke with four detainees and weapons they seized from a farmhouse near Taii.

The cache included several machine guns, a sniper rife, a rocket-popelled gre-nade launcher, pistols, several full ammunition magazines, mortar sights and other materials. Curiously, the weapons we buried in empty missle tubes marked as coming from Kuwair's Ministry of Desire to the control of the control

On Tuesday, Company A, 1st of the 69th, made a similar find, taking in six suspects. At the same time those detainees were being processed, a platoon of Black Sheep soldiers was patrolling in farmland near Taji. Rolling out in Bradley fighting vehicles, the first stop was a small farm com-

pound they'd visited twice before.

The first time was after a roadside bomb detonated along a canal about 100 yards away. The second time, soldiers found parts of a mortar system and confiscated a

This time, the search turned up nothing but a few spent shotgun shells, which the

owner said were from hunting parties who had stopped at his house. Staff Sgt. Joshua Garrett, 25, of Houma, La, ran through a list of questions about weapons, availability of power and fuel and the upcoming elections.

coming elections.

"We are ready to vote, we want that very much," the land-owner said, through a translator working with the troops. "We want the elections today, before tomor-

row."

But as Garrett asked more questions, it was apparent more work needed to be

"Do you know where your polling place is?" Garrett asked?

The man shrugged, "No." The local sheiks, he said, haven't passed on that infor-

As the conversation was taking place, Spc. Jonathon Boudreaux, 21, of Raceland, La, and Spc. Jesse LeBlanc, 23, also of Houma, searched the remaining rooms. In two rooms, they found sleeping children, but nothing illegal.



Above: Staff Sgt. Joshua Garrett of the Black Sheep gets ready to dismount from a Bradley Fighting Vehicle and conduct a patrol in the Taji countryside. Right: An Iraqi potato farmer works while a U.S. patrol passes through her field while searching for weapons.

Even the patrols that don't turn up weapons serve another purpose, the soldiers said. When they first arrived at Camp Cooke, the base took mortar or rocket fire nearly every day, they said. Since stepping up patrols and "denying the enemy terrain," they haven't had a round land inside

E-mail Joseph Giordono at: giordonoj@pstripes.osd.mil



Gen. does guard duty to give GIs day off

wo soldiers at a remote fire base in Afghanistan recently got a gift from the big guy No, not Santa Claus

For Christmas Mai Gen Eric T Olson commander of Combined Joint Task Force

76, traveled from his headquarters in REPORTER'S Waza Bagram to fire hase. **NOTEBOOK**

Khwa where he gave two soldiers the day off and pulled guard duty shift. 'Waza Khwa is one

of the more remote less developed bases," Olson stated in an Army news

fire bases," Olson stated in an Army news release. "I thought if there were any soldiers who could use a good break by switching with me for a day in Bagram, Waza Khwa was a good place to find them

Spc. Freddy Barahona, 22, and Spc Michael Hanes, 21, assigned to the 25th Infantry Division (Light) as infantrymen in Company C. 2nd Battalion, 27th Infantry Regiment, briefly met and talked with Olson before departing for Bagram, the release stated.

"Burger King was our first stop when we arrived" said Barahona a native of Antioch, Calif. "It was great to be able to spend

Christmas relaxing. watching some football, picking up a few items at the PX and being able to eat something that reminds us of home.

Olson spent his holiday accompanying several Company C soldiers on a patrol to two nearby villages following Christmas dinner and a brief tour of the base, accord-

A 'lousy' T-shirt

When soldiers of Company B, 1st Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment returned from a nighttime patrol in Baghdad, they found a



'souvenir" on the duty desk inside the comnany barracks.

Sitting in one corner were two bright-orange T-shirts bearing a familiar phrase back home ... with an Operation Iraqi Freedom twist. In black lettering were the folCombined Joint Task Force 76 Mai. Gen. Eric T. Olson talks to soldiers of Company C, 2nd Battalion, 27th Infantry Regiment in Waza Khwa, Afghanistan. following a patrol through villages on Christmas Day. COURTESY OF BRADLEY RHEN

lowing words: "I surrendered to the Americans and all I got was this lousy T-shirt.

The shirts brought chuckles from the group, which was scheduled for an early morning patrol less than six hours later.

Jason Chudy contributed to this report

Raids target insurgents



Stars and Stripes

ing to the release

Capt. Dave Maxwell, commander of Company B, 1st Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment, shows a photo of a jailed insurgent to a man detained in a house during an early Wednesday morning raid in southern Baghdad as a masked Iraqi interpreter translates his questions. The joint U.S. Army/Iraqi National Guard raid targeted three houses containing suspected anti-U.S./Iraqi interim government insurgents. In this house, soldiers discovered two AK-47 assault rifles and dozens of rounds of ammunition. Iraqis are allowed to keep one weapon and one magazine of ammunition. In other houses targeted in raids, a leaflet calling for people to kill Americans was found, as were three vehicles used to fire on U.S. and government forces. Also shown is Sgt.

SEALs file suit against AP over photos

Stars and Stripes WASHINGTON - Six Navy

SEALs filed suit Tuesday against The Associated Press for publishing photos they said revealed their identities and connected them to the prisoner abuse scandals in Iraq

The men, some of whom are still serving in Iraq, are asking for unspecified damages from the news service. They alleged the photos invaded their privacy and put their lives at risk by showing their faces in a series of photographs published earlier this

The photos, which showed the soldiers with hooded and handcuffed prisoners, were obtained by Associated Press reporter Seth Hettena, who also wrote a story suggesting they might show evidence of prisoner abuse.

Stars and Stripes ran the story and one of the photos in its Dec. 5 editions.

U.S. military forces came under heavy scrutiny this summer after the discovery of pictures showing Army Reserve troops abusing Iraqi prisoners at Baghdad's Abu Ghraib prison.

Navy Special Warfare Command began investigating the six SEALs following the photos re-lease. Spokesman Lt. Taylor Clark said Wednesday that the investigation has been expanded to include the unit's commanders. but so far the Navy has not released any of its findings.

James Huston, attorney for the SEALs, said the photos in this case were taken for documentation purposes and do not show any violation of standard covert operations procedures.

"When this goes to trial, I think everyone will see that they did nothing wrong," Huston said. "But they've been tarred because this reporter said this could be the earliest evidence of prisoner abuse in Iraq.

Associated Press assistant general counsel Dave Tomlin dismissed the charges.

"We believe AP's use of the pho tos and the manner in which they were obtained were entirely lawful and proper," he said, "We intend to defend ourselves and our reporter vigorously and, we expect, successfully. In a statement, one of the

SEALs called the reporter's actions "completely unnecessary."

this reporter's unprofessional behavior and the fact that he showed such disregard for us our safety, and the ongoing work we are doing," the unnamed plaintiff

"We find this conduct especially annalling in light of the continuing war in Iraq and the fact that we are continuing to put ourselves at risk.'

Huston said since the photos were released they have been published widely in the Arab media, putting the SEALs' lives in danger. Several were posted by Cuban government officials on a hillhoard outside of Guantanamo Bay, comparing the United States military to Nazis.

The lawsuit, filed in California, also accuses the AP of illegally obtaining the photos from a private Web site and names two of the SEALs' wives as co-plaintiffs who suffered emotional trauma as a result of the incident.

In addition to the damages, the suit asks that AP be stopped from republishing the photographs or releasing any related photos.

E-mail Leo Shane at: shanel@stripes.osd.mil

Parents of U.S. soldiers killed in Iraq take part in humanitarian aid campaign BY SHAFIKA MATTAR son, Jesus, 20, in the opening days of the in the group.

The Associated Press

AMMAN Jordan - Parents of U.S. soldiers killed in Iraq emotionally expressed their opposition to the war and occupation Tuesday during a visit to Jordan as part of a humanitarian aid campaign to help Iraqis displaced by fighting in Fallujah last

Fernando Suarez del Solar, 47, from San Diego, California, said he is angry with the U.S. administration "because American soldiers die for the oil and not for a just cause." He accused President George W Bush of lying about the reasons for the Iraqi war

He said that since the death of his only

war in 2003, he has been traveling the United States to speak out against the invasion and occupation of Iraq.

"I am angry because thousands and thousands of Iraqis die as well," said Del Solar, who visited Iraq last year to visit the site of his son's death and listen to Iraqis' needs "[Bush] promised the Iraqis democracy and he is depriving them of their daily needs of electricity, food and safety.

Del Solar and his wife, Rosa, were part of a group of 14 people representing three U.S.-based humanitarian organizations who came to Jordan to send about \$600,000 in humanitarian supplies to Fallujah. Three other parents of killed soldiers were

Medea Benjamin, who organized the trip

to Jordan, said the delegation would remain in Amman until Jan. 4 to "listen to and understand the real ordeal of the Iraqis and supervise the shipment of the aid to Falluiah.

The group, which arrived Monday in Amman, does not plan to travel to Iraq. She said the group had already sent to

Fallujah three shipments of medical supplies, blankets and toys collected by Global Exchange, CODEPINK and Physicians for Social Responsibility.

A bloody, two-week U.S. military offensive in November wrested Falluiah from the control of insurgents. Most of Fallujah's approximately 250,000 people fled before the assault.

Nadia McCaffrey, 59, of Tracy, California, said she was compelled to help Iraqis by her son, who told her shortly before his death: "I don't know what we are doing here and why we are here."

Patrick McCaffrey, 34, a member of California National Guard 579th Engineer Battalion, was killed in the city of Balad last

"My son thought that he was going to Iraq to do something for the Iraqi people. This feeling did not last one week," McCaffrey said.

I have to live with it and to do so I have to fight the war, and that is why I am here,' she said with tears in her eyes.

One group of troops return home...

574th Supply and Services Company back in Mannheim after year in Iraq

Stars and Stripes

MANNHEIM, Germany - Members of the supply company whose motto is "Warriors, mount up," were finally able to let go of the reins and dismount Tuesday, as the 574th Supply and Services Company re-

turned to Mannheim after a year in Iraq. More than 80 of the troops deployed with the unit marched into the Mannheim military community's sports arena at about 8 p.m. to the cheers of family members and

Many said they were nervous with anticipation about finally having their soldiers

"I don't think there will be any words that describe how I'll feel when I see him. said Veronica Apodaca, waiting with her 13-month-old son, Paul Joseph, for her husband, Spc. Paul Apodaca

For the Apodaca family, the return of the company will be a chance for a father to finally get to know the son born just before the troops left Jan. 8, Veronica said.

"He's only seen a total of maybe four weeks of [Paul Joseph's] life," she said. Just down the bleachers, another son waited for his father. First Sgt. Larry Tulk

arrived just in time to celebrate his 40th birthday on Wednesday.

"It's a good feeling" knowing his father came back safely, said Larry's son, 16-year-old Justin.

Company commander Capt. Natalie Rolling-Edlebeck, said she was extremely proud of her troops' performance in Iraq, where they had the perilous duty of running convoys in the region surrounding Logistics Support Area Anaconda north of Baghdad

Spread out at four different bases in the Sunni Triangle - the volatile region between Tikrit, Ramadi and Baghdad — the unit transported more than 80 million gallons of fuel and "produced, transported and distributed" more than 200 million gallons of water over the past year all without losing a soldier, Rolling-Edlebeck said.

"Every commander's dream is to be able to do the mission and bring everyone back alive," she said.

Eleven more members of the 574th are still on their way home from downrange, accompanying the unit's equipment, a rear



of the 574th Supply and Services Company, greets his wife, Martina, and son, Damian, at the Mannheim military community sports area Tuesday night after a year of deployment in Irag, Below: Spc. Alison Miller, from the 574th **Supply and Services** Company, hugs a friend at a welcoming ceremony Tuesday night in Mannheim, Germany, where the unit returned home after a year in Iraq. Miller had come home just ahead of her fellow soldiers, and greeted them at Tuesday's event. PHOTOS BY BEN MURRAY

Left: Set. Jose Sanien

detachment spokeswoman said Tuesday At full strength, the 574th includes 125 troops and 40 vehicles

For warriors returning Tuesday, the coming days will bring late holiday celebrations and family time, some said, while others will soon be on the mad again. At least two spouses said they had plans to take rest-and-recuperation leave in Hawaii with their soldiers in the coming weeks.

Rolling-Edlebeck's son, Benji, 8, said the family had some gifts waiting under the tree at home for his mom, one of which was ne boot-shining kit he got for her. Her husband, Marc Edlebeck, said the

wait for his wife has included a lot of anxiety, but now with her home he was more worried about having to take orders around the house again.

Tulk's wife, Anja, said the return of the "Tm just happy that he got back safe," she said. "After such a long time, you real-ize how important your spouse is."

E-mail Ben Murray at:



... just as another heads out for its Iraq deployment



Lt. Col. Tony Chambers, commander, 181st Transportation Battalion, speaks Wednesday at a deployment ceremony on Sullivan Barracks in Mannheim, Germany. The three companies leaving from the battalion will not go until after the New Year.

BY JESSICA INIGO bers, 181st Transportation Battal-

Stars and Strines

MANNHEIM, Germany Three companies within the 3rd Corps Support Command gave their battalion commander a crisp salute and sounded off with a "deployment ready" during a ceremony on Sullivan Barracks Wednesday.

The companies, which all fall under the 181st Transportation Battalion out of Turley Barracks in Mannheim, will deploy in support of Operation Iraq Freedom 3 for the second time.

The 51st Transportation Company, the 377th Transportation Company (Heavy Equipment Transporter) and the 515th Transportation Company (Petroleum, Oils and Lubricants) will be casing their colors to prepare for a deployment after the New Year according to Lt. Col. Tony Cham-

3 companies of 3rd Corps Support Command shipping out again ion commander.

Though each company does different jobs, such as transporting supplies, fuel or heavy equipment within the battalion, each will conduct tactical transportation missions, as well as transport all classes of supply and oversized

equipment when deployed.
"Your selfless service is a model for all to follow," Chambers said to the three companies from the podium.

After the ceremony, Chambers said family members are vital to troops being great warfighters and he commended them for "coming out in full force" to support their soldiers.

Chambers also said he is full of pride for the unwavering troops who are prepared to face the dangers of another Iraq deployment. During Operation Iraqi Freedom 1. he said, about 70 percent of his

troops faced danger and were attacked on 72 separate occasions. Yet, Chambers said he stood behind his leadership to get the soldiers back safe and sound.

"Commanders, first sergeants, platoon leaders, and platoon sergeants, that trust is yours. Now is the time to put your talents to the test," Chambers said during the ceremony

One of those leaders, Sgt. William Nowlin, a squad leader in the maintenance platoon, who was exded in June to deploy with his unit again, said despite the fact that he wasn't able to go home he's still deployment ready and

prepared to lead his troops.

The transportation companies are just three out of 14 V Corps companies scheduled to deploy to Iraq this coming year, according to a U.S. Army Europe press release issued in August.

Soldier's blind pooch is named top dog

By CHARLIE COON Stars and Strines

The mutt was covered with frost and grime and had a mouthful of broken teeth. There were empty red spots where its eyes should have been

It was led into the animal shelter by a man using a horse rope He'd found the dog wandering in

a frozen field. "It was a hor ror when we first saw him ' said Paige Eichwho worked at the shelter in Vir-

"When

you work at a shelter, you see We'd thought somebody had poked his eves out. It was very upsetting.

The spent a month on doggy death row, simpering The Eichelmans pose for a portrait and chewing on Tuesday with Toby his cage, little tears trickling from empty eye

Would-be adopters recoiled at the sight of the mangy

So can we say it? Heck, yeah. Every dog has his day.

Toby, now the adopted son of Army Maj. Mark and Paige Eich-

elman of Mannheim, Germany, has been voted the 2004 Great American Mutt.

The border collie mix was picked from 1.506 mutts entered in a contest sponsored by Tails in Need Inc., a New York City-based foundation that seeks to raise education on adoption of animals Judges narrowed the field to 12 semifinalists and five finalists be-

fore 5,700 online voters chose Toby as the No.

Toby received 42 percent of the 13,565 total votes to defeat Lucky, a terri-er-dachshund mix from California with huge ears, and three other finalists The results

were announced

Dec. 16. Toby, who is thought to be 4 years old, has come a long way from that day January

when he was found in a field near Charlottesville, Va.

Paige Eichelman was working at the Charlottesville-Albemarle Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals while her hushand attended classes at the University of Virginia. The Eichel-mans already owned a dog, a cat and a horse, and knew they'd be moving to Germany in June.

"The prospect of adding another animal to the mix and transporting it halfway around the world — I was not thrilled at the idea," said Mark Eichelman, now the officer in charge at the Mannheim Law Center

But Paige went to work behind her husband's back, arranging for the dog to be neutered as well as an operation to close its eyeholes to prevent infection. The veterinarian told her the dog had been

born with no eyes. Mark eventually agreed to a 48-hour trial run for Toby, which the dog failed miserably. He broke through the baby fence in the Eichelman's kitchen and proceeded to chew up carpet, a pair of ski pants and the electrical cord of an antique clock.

"The first couple of days were difficult." Mark said. "He seemed so mild-mannered at the shelter But he knocked the gates askew

and went on a rampage "The thought crossed my mind that unless the situation got better quickly, it wasn't going to work

Eventually, Toby learned how to avoid a trip back to the pound. He now veers around furniture as if guided by radar and makes friends by licking faces. Even Dixie, the Eichelman's 13-year-old shepherd-husky, and



PHOTOS BY RAYMOND T. CONWAY/Stars and Strip

Toby, a border collie mix who was born with no eyes, plays with his favorite chew toy in Mannheim, Germany, on Tuesday. Toby — who belongs to Maj. Mark Eichelman and his wife, Paige, of Mannheim was recently voted the 2004 Great American Mutt.

Gertrude, their 17-year-old cat, have welcomed their blind buddy As champion, Toby has won a

watercolor portrait of himself, a best-of-show ribbon and pet supplies. He'll also be featured in books and magazines about ani-

mal adoption. Best of all, the Eichelmans say, is that the Charlottesville-Albe marle SPCA has started the Toby Fund, an endowment with a goal

a \$300,000 to pay for adopt-a-pet education as well as surgeries on handicapped strays.

There is an anonymous quote that goes: "To err is human; to forgive, canine."

Mark Eichelman put it another way: "He's having quite an impact for a dog born with no eyes." For more information on Tails in Need Inc., see www.tailsinneed.com.

F-mail Charlie Coon at: onc@mail.estripes.osd.mil

Marine shot to death after police chase

Stars and Strines

A Twentynine Palms Marine who led Los Angeles police on a high-speed chase after allegedly killing a transgender prostitute in Hollywood was shot to death by officers, according to a report in The (Palm Springs, Calif.) Desert Sun. Lance Cpl. Patrick Edward Val-

lor, 22, an MP, allegedly pointed a gun at pursuing officers in a Mc-Donald's restaurant parking lot in the Atwater Village area early Sunday, Assistant Chief Jim Mc-Donnell said.

Vallor apparently picked up a prostitute he believed was a fe-male, investigators told The Desert Sun. When he discovered the prostitute was a man, the Marine allegedly killed the man and dumped the body

LAPD has declined to release further information about the incident, which is under investiga-

Officers first fired a beanbag round to subdue Vallor, but he pointed the weapon at officers and he was shot, Officer Jack Richter told the paper Monday

Report: Letter alerted brass of rape allegations

Scripps Howard News Service

WASHINGTON - A "concerned citizen" alerted top Air Force officials about rape allegations at the Air Force Academy six months before an anonymous e-mail set off a media firestorm, Pentagon records

The text of a June 28, 2002, letter, which was unsigned, is contained in a newly released report from the Department of Defense inspector general's office, which is still investigating the way various Air Force officials handled the author's complaint.

The letter, addressed to Air Force Secretary James Roche, Air Force Chief of Staff John Jumper and other

officials, made allegations in capital letters.
"FEMALE CADETS ARE BEING RAPED AND SEXUALLY HARASSED BY MALE CADETS AND ACADEMY OFFICIALS REFUSE TO PROSECUTE THE MALE RAPISTS," the letter said.

The letter alluded to various cases that ended without prosecutions and called for an investigation to be turned over to the FBL

According to the DOD report, the letter was referred to the Air Force inspector general's office, at the time headed by Lt. Gen. Raymond Huot. Huot's office reportedly focused on the specific charge about the offic-er's alleged comments. No disciplinary action was

Huot said his office's "complaint analysis" was prop-er. He said investigators found no evidence of wrongdoing by the officer accused of disparaging a rape victim.

Two Marines wed before Middle East deployment BY MARTIN C. EVANS She graduated from West Babylon

Newsday

MINEOLA, N.Y. - The bride had planned to say her vows in her blue Ma rine parade uniform, but the groom had a similar sartorial outfit in mind

So instead, Cpl. Jessica Frugoni of West Babylon wore an ivory-colored satin dress, a strapless design that revealed the Marine Corps bulldog tattoo she wears on her back.

Frugoni, 21, and Lance Cpl. German Cruz, 20, a pair of Marines bound for southwest Asia, promised their lives to each other Monday at State Supreme

"Actually, this is a lot bigger than we had planned," said Cruz, of Voorhees, N.J., moments after the couple were pronounced husband and wife in a courtroom crowded by family, friends and

The couple decided to tie the knot less than three weeks ago, after Cruz learned that his planned deployment to Iraq, originally planned for sometime in March, had been moved up to the first days of February. The new bride also will serve in that war-torn region, shipping out for Iraq or Afghanistan in Octo-

"We realized we really didn't have much time," Cruz said.

Frugoni's relatives said her decision to join the Marines two years ago and her recent plans to get married took them by surprise.

High School in 2001, then enrolled at Binghamton University.

But after spending a year there, she called home and told her family she had

"This is all pretty sudden, so we're all a little in shock. said her father. Charles Frugoni of West Babylon, who served four years in the Marines in the late 1960s and served in Vietnam in 1967.

"They wanted to be married before he went away."

Both Frugoni and Cruz said they joined the military to earn money for college.

The couple, who are stationed at Camp Lejeune, N.C., met 17 months ago while stationed in Okinawa, Japan. Military orders separated them soon after, but they were reunited when they were transferred to North Carolina.

They will have another four weeks of married life together before Cruz is scheduled to ship to Iraq.

"I'm nervous, but that's what he signed up for, so I have to be a Marine about it." Frugoni said

"Of course, there are a lot of people over there getting hurt," she said. "I just

hope he comes home safe." Relatives said they are happy for the newlyweds, but also apprehensive about Cruz's impending deployment.

"It's a little like Vietnam - anything could happen at any time," said Furgon-i's father. "But I'm also proud of him. He's doing the right thing.

Navy investigates sailor's death A U.S. Navy sailor was found hanging from

a pipe outside a tool room aboard the USS Emory S. Land early Wednesday morning in La Maddalena, Sardinia, according to a 6th Elect official

The man, whose name was not released, was found by fellow sailors at around 1 a.m. but efforts to revive him were unsuccessful said 6th Fleet spokeswoman Cmdr. Cate Muel-

The U.S. Navy is investigating the incident. From staff reports

IN THE WORLD

Nations answer calls to help devastated area

BY LELY T. DJUHARI

The Associated Pre

BANDA ACEH, Indonesia — Cargo planes touched down with aid Wednesday, bearing everyhing from lentils to water purifiers to help survivors facing the threat of epidemic after this week's quake-tsunami catastrophe. The first Indonesian military west coast of Sumatra island, finding thousands of bodies and increasing the death toll across 12 nations to nearly 77,000.

The international Red Cross warned that the toll could eventually pass 100,000. And the race was on to prevent an outbreak of diseases and to curb food shortages among the millions homeless.

The United Nations reported Wednesday that the world's richest nations have pledged more than \$250 million for victims of the killer earthquake and tsunami.

Spain announced the largest single contribution on Wednesday — 50 million euros. Britain

U.S. military beefs up relief efforts

BY PATRICK DICKSON

Stars and Stripe

WASHINGTON — The U.S. military is adding more ships, planes and people to its relief efforts on behalf of the victims of Sunday's massive earthquake and resulting tsunamis.

Joint Chiefs of Staff Director of Operations Lt. General James T. Conway briefed reporters from the State Department on Wednesday. He said that six C-130 aircraft will be operating out of the air base at Utanon Thailand, south of Bangkok

base at Utapao, Thailand, south of Bangkok. "We have committed nine P-3 aircraft," Conway said, "four of which will operate out of Utapao; the other five will operate out of Diego Garcia," a small island in the Indian Ocean that escaped dam-

age from the ocean surges.
"The [USS Abraham] Lincoln Carrier Strike Group... has been diverted now to the Gulf of Thailand," Conway said.

pledged 15 million pounds (\$29

million). Australia said Wednes-

day it would give an additional

(\$27.6 million). The United States

million Australian dollars

"The Bonhomme Richard Expeditionary Strike Group was in Guam. It is forgoing port visits there and in Singapore to move rapidly to the Bay of Bengal. It is estimated to be on station sometime on or before 7 January. It has seven ships associated with the strike group [and] carries 25 helicopters.

"(There are] 2,100 Marines [and] 1,400 sailors embarked aboard the Bonhomme Richard Expeditionary Strike Group and 15th MEU [Marine Expeditionary Unit]." he said.

The U.S. Pacific Command, which is in charge of relief efforts, will send five ships with fresh-water producing capability.

A ship with a field hospital will also be sent, Conway said. Two more ships based at Diego Garcia with a 90,000-gallon fresh water capability will be sent as soon as possible.

India began vaccinating 65,000

survivors against cholera, ty-

phoid, hepatitis A and dysentery:

authorities sprayed bleaching

nowder on beaches where bodies

E-mail Pat Dickson at: dicksonp@stripes.osd.mil

have been recovered.

Western Sumatra suffered a double blow in Sunday's disaster, shattered both by the most powerful earthquake in 40 years and perhaps the deadliest tsunami in recorded history.

"Seventy-five percent of the west coast is destroyed and some places it's 100 percent," Maj. Gen. Endang Suwarya, the military commander of the island's Aceh province, said. "These people are isolated and we will try and get them help."

and get them help.

The first military teams reached the devastated fishing town of Meulaboh on Sumatra's coast, and across the coast they found thousands of bodies, bring-ing Indonesia's toll to 45,268, according to the Health Ministry.

Sri Lanka on Wednesday listed more than 22,400 people dead, India close to 7,000 — with 8,000 missing and feared dead. Thailand put its toil at more than 1,800. Another 340 were killed in Malaysia, Myanmar, Bangladesh, the Maldives, Somalia, Tanzania and Kenya.

Misawa couple survives tsunami while on honeymoon

pledged \$35 million [see related

first reports of measles and diar-

Sri Lanka said it was getting its

Paramedics in southern

story on Page 91

By JENNIFER H. SVAN Stars and Stripes

MISAWA AIR BASE, Japan — The Shelbys waited a year for a honeymoon they now wish they could forget.

Airman 1st Class Chad Shelby and his wife, Megan, are among the survivors of the worst tsunami in recorded history.

They returned to Misawa on Tuesday night, tan and dazed, with numerous scrapes and bruises and a digital camera that recorded both the happiest of memories and the worst imaginable.

On Wednesday, after checking into the hospital and setting up an appointment to speak with a counselor at Life Skills, the Shelbys shared their story with Stars and Stripes.

Married a year, Chad, 20, an entry controller with Misawa's 35th Security Forces Squadron, and Megan, 21, celebrated their first anniversary by taking the honeymoon they never had in Thailand over the holiday.

After a visit to Chang Mai in the north, they were to spend several days in Thailand's famed southern paradise of Phuket. Sunday morning, the day after Christmas, the plan was to go scuba diving. The Shelbys were checking out gear and watching an instructional video at a scuba dive shop and bar on Patong Beach when all hell broke loose.

The first wave, which the couple estimates came ashore sometime after 9:30 a.m. local time, washed far up on the beach, dumping fish and crabs on the sand. The scuba instructor remarked he had "never seen anything like this," Chad said.

About two minutes later, another wave crashed into the scuba shack, trapping Megan and two others in a storage room.

"The water filled up to armpit level real quick," Megan said. "It just came in like somebody took a swimming pool, turned it upside down and dumped it on you. We didn't even know this was a tidal wave. We just didn't know."

Chad, who was outside the storage room when the wave hit, was able to climb up on the clay-shingled roof and pry the door



Photo courtesy of Chad

The Shelbys' scuba-diving instructor stands where the scuba shack was before a tsunami ripped it apart. Airman 1st Class Chad Shelby and his wife Megan, pictured right, were sitting in the shop on Patong Beach in Thailand when the tsunami hit. They returned to Misawa Air Base. Japan, this week.

open from above, freeing Megan and the others. Fearing more waves, the pair struggled to get up on another roof, helping, among others, a 3-year-old Japanese boy separated from his parents and a trembling, elderly Frenchman to higher ground. That's when they saw the third wave coming, a towering wall of water about 10 to 15 feet high, Chad estimated.

"I thought 'we have to get higher,' " Megan said. They jumped onto the top of another one-story building farther away from the beach with a few other people. The giant wave crested palm trees on the beach and the Shelbys watched with horror as the top of the wave washed over the scuba shack, triping it apart.

"We just jumped with all we could to the next roof," Megan said.

"That one broke as we jumped onto it,"

Chad said. "We climbed up onto the next roof and waited." And prayed. That was the last standing

And prayed. That was the last standing building in their reach. The water rose to just below roof level.

"If another wave would have come, we would not have survived," Megan said, estimating that they were about 50 to 60 feet from the beach at that point.

"Everything on the beach was gone," Megan said. "Most of the concrete buildings still stood, but the windows were gone. Every piece of furniture was gone. It was just like a gutted, empty house. There were TVs, computers, shoes, food strewn all along the beach. The water just washed everything away."

The Shelbys didn't see anyone die but they won't forget the sounds.

"People screaming for their children, for loved ones. The biggest thing you heard



JENNIFER H. SVAN/Stars and Stripes

was the ocean. Everyone was looking for the next wave to come crashing," Megan said

Chad and Megan waited in the baking sun for three hours with an Australian and a few other tourists on the roof. The water level in the streets below had recorded to about 5 to 6 inches. Some locals helped them down and back to their hotel room. They had scratches, bruises and gashes from falling.

Their hotel on Patong Beach weathered

the waves, and because they still had their passports and airline tickets, the Shelbys were on one of the first flights out of Phuket on Monday, the same day they were scheduled to leave.

Four days later, the near-death experience seems like a dream. The young couple simply can't believe they survived.

"I actually thought we were going to die." Megan said. Megan credits her husband for not panicking when the second wave blew into the

scuba shack.
"I was just thinking of how to get higher, just survival I guess," Chad said. "If either one of us had panicked, we would have just

A beach lover, Megan said it will be a long time before she sets foot near an ocean again.

"Nobody had any warning," she said. "I just feel so sorry for the people who died, who didn't make it."

who didn't make it."
"We're so lucky," Chad said.

E-mail Jennifer H. Svan at

Bush announces coalition to help in relief effort

BY DEB RIECHMANN
The Associated Press

CRAWFORD, Texas — President George W. Bush announced Wednesday the United States, India, Australia and Japan have formed an international coalition to coordinate worldwide relief and reconstruction efforts for the Asian region ravaged by a deadly earthquake and Isunamis.

"We will prevail over this destruction," Bush said from his Texas ranch in his first comments on the disaster Sunday that so far has killed more than 76,000.

Bush said the catastrophe had "brought loss and grief to the world that is beyond our comprehension," and he pledged a multifaceted response from the United States. In the short-term, the help will include damage assessment teams and U.S. military manpower, such as a Marine expeditionary force followed by long-term repulding assistance. He said he'd

also examine a suggestion from German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder to consider putting a moratorium on the debt of hard-hit Somalia and Indonesia.

"We'll look at all requests," said Bush, who talked by phote Wednesday morning with leaders from Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Talaland and India. "We're still in the stage of immediate help. But surely, the size of the problem will become known, particulaly when it comes to rebuilding infrastructure and community to help these affected parts of the world get back up on their feet."

Secretary of State Colin Powell, coordinating relief assistance, telephoned U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan, Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and Foreign Ministers Nobutaka Machiura of Japan and Alexander Downer of Australia.

Meantime, the International



An airport crewmember prepares relief supplies to transport to Aceh Province at Halim Perdana Kesumah base in Jakarta on Tuesday.

Monetary Fund said it will work with governments affected by the disaster to provide reconstruction and financial assistance. But details have not been worked out, with governments more focused now on dealing with the immediate humanitarian crisis, officials of the financial institution said.

Bush called on Americans to donate cash to relief organizations to augment the response and said he expected several other nations to join the coalition started by the four countries.

He expressed concern the Asian region wasn't prepared with a warning system that foretold the massive tsunamis and threw his support behind creation of a worldwide system.

Bush also pointedly dismissed a

United Nation official's suggestion that rich nations like the United States have been "stingy" in relief efforts. "I felt like the person who made that statement was very misguided and ill informed," Bush

Hundreds of Americans remain missing. Bush said U.S. officials were working hard to locate many more Americans who remain unaccounted for and to provide assistance to those who were injured or displaced in the region.

Despite ruin, forces still on terror watch

BY PAUL ALEXANDER
The Associated Press

MANILA, Philippines — Security forces on alert for possible terrorist attacks in Southeast Asia during the Christmas-New Year holidays are trying to remain vigilant, although their focus has shifted to coping with the tsunami that has devastated regional coast-lines.

Dealing with the disaster aftermath across the region with about a dozen countries affected by Sunday's earthquake and resulting tsunain "divides attention," said senior Supt. Rodolfo Mendoza, head of the Phillippine National Police's anti-terrorism office.

"We have a certain degree of vulnerability," he added, suggesting terror groups might try to take advantage of the chaos as attack-

ers did recently in his country. While the Philippines was spared the havoc that its neighbors have suffered this week, it was still recovering from brutal storms that killed over 1,000 people when a large timebomb was found on a bus in Manila on Christmas Eve, just before it was set to explode.

Still, terrorist or militant groups face the same limits on their movements as anyone else because local infrastructure has been destroyed, noted Bradley Allan, a security consultant.

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Waves of history don't top tsunami

BY RANDOLPH E. SCHMID The Associated Press

WASHINGTON - The tsunami that claimed thousands of lives across the Indian Ocean had the deadliest great waves in more than a century and probably in

modern history. More than 36,000 people were killed by the tsunami following the explosion of the volcano Krakatau in the Sunda Strait near Java on Aug. 27, 1883. Many estimates of the number killed in that disaster were even higher.

The toll from Sunday's tsunami has now topped 76,800 deaths in 11 nations.

Following the 1883 eruption. waves estimated as high as 90 feet slammed ashore on nearby islands, wining out coastal communities in what is now Indonesia That had been the deadliest tsunami of modern times until now.

The earliest description of a tsunami-type wave comes from 479 B.C. in the northern part of the Aegean Sea. Similar waves have been reported worldwide, though they are more common in the Pacific with its earthquake-prone pe-

Many historians believe the ex-

plosive eruption of Santorini in the Aegean Sea in 1500 B.C. caused a tsunami that brought widespread devastation to the eastern Mediterranean.

Thousands of coastal residents in Spain, Portugal and North Afri-ca were killed by waves spawned a 1755 earthquake at Lisbon.

Over the centuries, Japan has been the land most plagued by tsunamis, with at least 66,000 deaths recorded there since A.D. 684.

Among the deadliest tsunamis was one that struck Honshu, Japan, in 1896, killing an estimated 27,000.

Many coastal residents were in the streets celebrating a holiday when the wave struck. The next day, fishermen returning home found a scene of devastation strewn with bodies and ruined homes for miles.

Indonesia has seen more than 50,000 deaths in more than 30 destructive tsunamis over the centu-- not including the most recent disaster.
On April 1, 1946, a Pacific-wide

tsunami was generated by a magnitude 7.8 earthquake near Unimak Island in Alaska's Aleutian Island chain

A huge wave destroyed the U.S. Coast Guard's Scotch Cap light-



mi-stricken areas near the coastal outskirts of Banda Aceh. the capital city of Indonesia's Aceh province, were still water-logged on Monday.

use on Unimak, killing all five of its occupants. The lighthouse was a steel-reinforced concrete structure standing about 90 feet above sea level.

That tsunami reached the Hawaiian Islands about five hours later, obliterating Hilo's waterfront and killing 159 people.

Altogether, 165 people died, in-cluding children attending school at Hawaii's Laupahoehoe Point, where waves reaching up to 25 feet struck

As a result of this wave, two years later the United States established a Pacific Tsunami Warning Center in Hawaii

Other notable tsunamis have in-

■ Aug. 16, 1976; A tsunami generated by a quake on Mindanao in the Philippines killed between 5,000 and 8,000 people in the Moro Gulf region

■ March 28, 1964: A magnitude 8.4 quake in Alaska generated tsu-namis that caused damage in southeastern Alaska, in Vancouver Island, British Columbia, and in the states of Washington, California and Hawaii. More than 120

■ May 22, 1960: The largest earthquake - magnitude 8.6 - of the 20th century occurred off the coast of south central Chile. It generated a Pacific wide tsunami which was destructive locally in Chile and throughout the Pacific.

Few wild animals killed by tsunami

The Associated Press

VALA NATIONAL PARK Sri Lanka — Wildlife officials in Sri expressed surprise Wednesday that they found no evidence of large-scale animal deaths from the weekend's massive tsunami - indicating that animals may have sensed the wave coming.

An Associated Press photograoher who flew over Sri Lanka's Yala National Park in a helicop ter saw abundant wildlife, includ-ing elephants, buffalo, deer, and not a single animal corpse.

Floodwaters from the tsunami swept into the park, uprooting trees and toppling cars onto their roofs - one car even ended up on top of a huge tree - but the aniapparently were not harmed and may have sought out high ground, said Gehan de Silva Wijeyeratne, whose Jetwing Eco Holidays ran a hotel in the park.

"This is very interesting. I am finding bodies of humans, but I have yet to see a dead animal," said Wijeyeratne. "Maybe what we think is true, that animals have a sixth sense."



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Court asked to dismiss Yukos bankruptcy

BY KRISTEN HAYS The Associated Press

HOUSTON - Deutsche Bank wants a U.S. Bankruptcy Court in Houston to dismiss the filing of Russian oil giant Yukos for lack of jurisdiction, contending the company has no American presence beyond two small bank accounts and the residence of its financial chief

In its filing Tuesday, the bank said Yukos' filing was nothing more than a desperate and unsuccessful effort to thwart the auction of its main production subsidiary in an ongoing tax dispute with the Russian government.

Deutsche Bank was one of a consortium of banks - including ABN Amro and Dresdner Kleinwort Wasserstein - that had intended to fund a \$10 billion to \$13 billion bid by state-owned natural gas company Gazprom to buy Yuganskneftegaz, which produces 60 percent of Yukos' oil and 11 percent of Russia's oil.

The Russian government engineered the Dec. 19 auction to pay off some of the \$27.5 billion in back taxes it says is owed by Yukos, which the company dis-

Mike Lake, a spokesman for Yukos' lawyers, said Tuesday the company is confident its Chapter 11 case was filed in the proper venue and that "we are prepared to be back in court defending that



Russia's state-owned oil company Rosneft's headquarters rises above the Moscow River last week. The other shoe has dropped in the mysterious, backroom deals that have quietly handed the Kremlin control over the os oil giant's most important production unit — an apparently secret, no-bid sale to Russia's state-owned oil company Rosneft. Rosneft purchased the virtually unknown BaikalFinansGroup, in a deal Wednesday that appeared to move the unit one step closer to ownership by state-controlled gas giant Gazprom.

position again."

The consortium froze the money after U.S. Bankruptcy Judge Letitia Clark in Houston granted an emergency injunction to block the auction on Dec. 16, two days after the oil company filed its Chapter 11 case.

Yukos claimed the bankruptcy was properly filed in Texas because CFO Bruce Misamore was

and broke her leg, her son Momir

told Srna news agency. He said

his mother had never been ill in

Markovic was not even regis-

tered in the files of the local hospi-

tal in Srebrenica, located some 43

miles northeast of Sarajevo.

Lethal liquor kills 51

ROMBAY India - Poisonous

liquor sold by an illegal bar in In-dia's financial capital has killed

51 people and sent nearly 100 oth-

ers to hospital over two days, pro-

voking citywide raids on alcohol

vendors, a municipal official said

Police arrested the woman who

owned the har and 6,800 gallons

of illicit homemade liquor have

been seized in raids across the

city at other illegally run liquor

shops, a senior excise officer said

been suspended for their failure

to stop the illegal liquor business, Deputy Chief Minister R.R. Patil

Liquor poisoning is common in

India. To increase potency and

quantity, chean homemade brew

is sometimes mixed with methyl

alcohol, which can cause blind-

ness or death. The victims are al-

most always the poor who cannot

afford more expensive alcohol.

on condition of anonymity.

Seventeen policemen

the agency said.

Tuesday.

told reporters

conducting company business from his home in Houston, having returned there earlier in December after learning that he may be targeted by Russian authorities if he returned to Moscow. Also, Yukos put \$7 million in two Houston bank accounts to cover legal fees and Misamore's

costs In granting the injunction,

fewer sick days this year than ever recorded, the government said Wednesday, suggesting they are increasingly worried about losing their jobs amid high unemployment, a sluggish economy

A survey of sick-day data in January-November showed absences from work at their lowest since the government began collecting data in 1970, the Health

Germans took an average 11.9 sick days during the period, down from 13.5 for all of 2003, the BKK health insurance association said The 2004 full-year figure was expected to be below last year's, too. the group said.

ISLAMARAD Pakistan - Pakis stan's President Gen. Pervez Musharraf is planning an important speech to the nation, a senior official said Wednesday, amid speculation he will explain his decision to renege on a promise to step down as army chief by the end of the year.

address on radio and television Thursday, the senior government official said on condition of anonymity

in a bloodless coup in 1999, pledged last December to leave his job as army chief and become a civilian head of state by the end of 2004

Russia forged ahead with the auction as planned. But an unknown company, BaikalFinans-Group, bought the subsidiary for \$9.4 billion - at least half of what Yukos claims it is worth. But in recent weeks, Mushar-

raf has said he will go back on his

Clark accepted jurisdiction of the

bankruptcy. Her order was up-

held by U.S. District Judge

Nancy Atlas when Gazprom ap-

Israeli drug use

pealed.

promise.

JERUSALEM - Drug consumption in the Israeli military is on the rise, and up to 10 percent of active-duty soldiers are now users, the commander of Israel's military police said Tuesday.

Gen. Mickey Barel's comments are almost certain to raise alarm in Israel, where the army is highly regarded. Military service in Israel is compulsory, with most males serving three years and fe-

Defector a U.S. worker

SEOUL, South Korea - A South Korean man who had worked for the U.S. military has defected to North Korea, the North's official news agency claimed Wednesday.

Kim Ki-ho, 59, left for the North because he could no longer stand South Korean society where national dignity and human rights are infringed on by the United States, the North's Korean Central News Agency said.

The report said Kim was a native of the industrial town of Gumi, and had once worked as an inspector at the 6th Ordnance Bat-talion, at the U.S. 8th Army Headquarters in South Korea

The U.S. military couldn't immediately confirm if any person by that name had worked for

state-owned oil company that is being folded into Gazprom. bought BaikalFinansGroup.

Some have speculated that Gazprom, an international gas energy titan that's 40 percent owned by Russia, was involved in the winning bid.

Last week Yukos attorneys told Clark the company plans to wait until a sale of its key production subsidiary is finalized next month to seek \$20 billion in damages from the buyer.

On Tuesday the company said it will serve notice in several publications that the auction violated U.S. bankruptcy law, which Yukos says protects all Yukos assets upon the Chapter 11 filing.

Deutsche Bank said in Tuesday's filing that Houston was "a jurisdiction in which Yukos owns no real or personal property and conducts no business operations '

Yukos founder and former CEO Mikhail Khodorkovsky accused the Kremlin of stealing his Yukos oil empire with legal maneuvering in a letter from prison published Tuesday. Khodorkovsky is being tried for fraud and tax evasion, and has been jailed for 14 months.

The next hearing in the bankruptcy is slated for Jan. 6.

Explosions reported in Saudi capital

The Associated Press

RIYADH, Saudi Arabia - Two large explosions shook the Saudi capital late Wednesday, according to officials and TV reports.

The first explosion at about 8:35 p.m. shattered windows and sent smoke and flames rising into the nighttime sky near the Saudi Interior Ministry in central Riy-

A police official said the second explosion, about an hour later, took place in a center for recruiting emergency troops located five miles from the scene of the first explosion. He said the cause of the two explosions was not imme-diately clear. Al-Arabiya television reported the second explosion was part of a failed attempt to storm the recruiting center.

There were no immediate reports of casualties in the second. In addition to the Interior Ministry, the Civil Service Ministry, a post office and a luxury hotel are in the area, known as al-Mura-

The Saudi government has been cracking down on militants since a series of al-Oaida-affiliated attacks on residential compounds in May 2003. The attacks have killed several Westerners.

A first for 105-year-old

SARAJEVO, Bosnia-Herzegovina - A 105-year-old Bosnian granny has been treated by a doctor for the first time in her life a Rosnian news agency reported Wednesday

Milia Markovic slipped and fell



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in her house in a remote moun-German sick days down tain village near Srebrenica in eastern Bosnia earlier this week

- Germans took and a shrinking welfare state.

Markovic is considered to be one of the oldest people in Bosnia,

Musharraf's about-face

Musharraf was set to make the

Musharraf, who seized power

From wire reports

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Bad judgment in use of photo

I am horrified by the Dec. 20 Page 1 photo for the Europe and Mideast editions "Iragi election workers gunned down in Baghdad street").

How does Stars and Stripes rationalize placing a photo of a man shooting another man on the front page of a newspaper? This same newspaper, being displayed all over our base where children can see it, prompted my 4-year-old to comment on the bad guy on the front page shooting another per-

son At what point did Stripes editors decide to disregard any sort of good judgment and go for full-bred sensationalism? What purpose could this possibly have served our military community?

Shame on Stripes! I'm disgusted with the

Beverly Eagen Darmstadt, Germany

Just what is a 'theory'?

Many letters have vehemently defended evolution recently. A common theme is as serting that evolutionary "theory" is of equal stature with relativity and atomic theory, among others.

This is not a valid argument, however, as it implies that it is possible to test and ob-serve and therefore show concrete evidence supporting evolution. That is just not the case. There is no "test" for evolutionary process, let alone one that is repeatable, which is one of the requirements of any scientific hypothesis to make the difficult transition to theory

While much is made of the circumstantial evidence seemingly supporting evolution, science has neither an explanation nor even the faintest clue what the process is by which DNA changes from generation to generation, let alone how it adds new genetic information. No gain in genetic information has ever been observed. Evolution itself hinges on this one aspect, and is impossible without. Unless of course we are to believe that whatever climbed out of that primordial ooze already contained all the information necessary for all life on this planet.

This and many other reasons are why one of the world's foremost atheists, professor Antony Flew, recently stated that after a lifetime of research, science has convinced him that a "superintelligent designer" is the only explanation for life on Earth.

My point is not to say that creationism is provable. My point simply is that, based on the latest scientific evidence, it is at least on equal footing with the hypothesis of evolution. Why is only one of these two competing ideas taught to our children and presented to them as fact? I think any honest person of science would agree that is not fair, and does not train our future to be free-thinking, constructively skeptical people. Spc. Andrew Shaw

Tikrit, Iraa

Neighbor reflects season It amazes me how, even during a holiday

season, people must still argue about some-thing. Whether it's about what we should

Tell us what you think

Stars and Stripes welcomes your comments on editorials and columns that are published in the newspaper, and values letters on topics of importance in the lives of our readers. All letters must be signed, and must include the writer's address or base and telephone number. Please limit all letters to 300 words. We reserve the right to edit letters for length, taste and clarity.

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say to wish each other a joyful day, or about the decorations we put out, there is always controversy

Instead of arguing all the time, we should be recognizing those who go to great lengths to make everyone happy, no matter what holiday they choose to take part in.

A perfect example of this kind of person

is my neighbor, Kathy Bergman. some of us chose to think of ways to win a de-bate about the term "Happy Holidays," Bergman spent countless hours playing Santa in the Mannheim, Germany, community

She was in charge of the Angel Tree program, which consisted of making a list, wrapping gifts and checking the list twice in order to make sure the less fortunate chil-dren of Mannheim all received at least one gift for the holidays. It never occurred to her that maybe one of these children celebrated Hanukkah, instead of her traditional Christmas, or that he or she chose to say "Happy Holidays" instead of "Merry Christ mas." Every angel got a gift nevertheless. I know this, because I had the pleasure of volunteering to help her and, by doing so, I saw what the real meaning of any December holiday is about. Each one is about faith and hone

During war and deployments, we have a lot more to worry about than which holiday it is. It is a time for everyone to recognize that there is hope for us all, hope for my middle school peers and me to make changes so that our children won't spend their special holiday time quarrelling over decorations and wrongly taken well wishes. I would like to thank all who gave hope to

someone who needed it, and Happy Chrismakwanzukkah!

Alvssa Howell Mannheim, Germany

Force-feeding not fulfilling

To the writer of "What 'holiday' is it?" (Dec. 22): Even though I am a Buddhist, it does not offend me when people wish me a merry Christmas. I accept the greeting in the spirit that it is offered. However, I believe it is unfair to label those who do object 'the lunatic fringe.'

Unless you are a follower of a non-Christian religion (or no religion at all), you probably will not notice how much Christianity permeates life in the States and the U.S. military. There are Christian prayers at change-of-command ceremonies, mandatory-working lunches, training events, "holiday" parties, etc., and religious program-ming on American Forces Network is pretty much all Christian. It can be very annoying, and some people are just fed up with it.

I respect your right to practice your religion as you wish. Please respect my right not to have it force-fed to me. Pamela Reaville

Yokohama, Japan

KBR men applauded

They call themselves the Iron Ponv Express. They are the American civilian KBR truck drivers who haul every letter and every package from APO to APO across Iraq. And as a soldier who has worked with them every day for the past 10 months, I

want to thank them.
Until just recently, these men, who carry no weapons, rode the main supply routes and alternate supply routes of Iraq with no more ballistic protection than the individual armor vest on their chest and the Kevlar helmet on their heads. They have been at-tacked with roadside bombs, rocket-propelled grenades, small-arms fire and indirect fire right along with the gun trucks among them. Some have been wounded. Some have been killed.

These men have been the ones who wiped our tears each time we lost a fellow soldier and patted our backs after another mission well done.

These men don't complain about the relatively little protection they have. These men don't worry about Bronze Star Medals or Combat Infantryman Badges. They are free to walk away and go home at any time, though many were here before I arrived, and many will remain long after I'm gone These are the men of the Iron Pony Express. And as a soldier who has come not only to respect them, but to love them as family. I salute them. Spc. Kitty Poss

Camp Victory, Baghdad

Ammo cans shouldn't be mailed I'm certainly no postal inspector, but

when I read that a specialist had lost his footlockered items that were located in an ammo can ("Please return missing goods letter, Dec. 21), I couldn't help but think that customs officers, the postal inspectors, or perhaps even explosive ordnance dispos-al personnel may be able to answer where his stuff was more than could a thief.

Imagine officials coming across a metal can, which obviously was designed to hold explosives, in a personal footlocker though paranoid, it's possible that could've been removed and blown in place if they weren't able to properly X-ray the contents. Just a thought. Some things were not designed to be used

as mailing containers, and ammo cans are certainly on top of that list. Sgt. 1st Class Hans M. Nunemaker

Hanau, Germany

BY GARRY TRUDEAU

Doonesbury









STARS AND STRIPES WEB SITE: WWW.STRIPES.COM

OPINION

Some Iraqis defy insurgents to seek peace

BY FRED HIATT The Washington Post

Relating to Washington from Bagdada this month for home leave gave A. Heather Coyne a considerative of the U.S. Institute of Peace, Coyne emerging civil society. Back home, the final country's emerging civil society. Back home, the finds emerging civil society—that Irraja remain involved with rebuilding their country despite all the explosions and killings.

No, this is not a "good news" story. To the contrary, Coyne's experience confirms the deterioration of conditions in Iraq. She is confined, for security reasons, to Baghdad's heavily fortified Green Zone. Her Iraqi colleagues for the most part dare not visit her there, because terrorists are always watching those who come and go.

Communication is by phone and e-mail.

Recently the institute held a workshop on conflict resolution in Sulaymaniyah, in the relatively peaceful Kurdish north, because the capital is too dangerous. One participant was a Mosul professor who lectures with 10

armed bodyguards in his classroom.

The insurgents, in other words, are succeeding, not only in killing and wounding Iraqis and Americans but in impeding Iraqis' ability to rebuild their country and to interact with one another and foreigners.

They're blocking precisely the kinds of interaction a society needs to begin recovering from decades of dictatorship. Worse: The violence is exacerbating sectarian tensions, as the insurgents also intend. So far a remarkable feature of the war has been Kurdish and, especially, Shiite restraint in the face of provocation from Sumi terrorists. But Phebe Marr, a senior fellow at the Institute of Peace who also recently returned from Iraq, says the sectarian-based anger is worse than she's ever seen.

Yet what strikes Coyne is not the bad news — maybe because she's living in the middle of it — but the fortitude and persistence in the face of attacks of the Iraqis she works with. The Mosal professor keeps teaching, One local leader called the day after he had been shot three times — to ask whether the institute had accepted the people he had recommended to take part in a seminar. Another, whose house was torched, got in touch to make sure Coyne had his new telephone number.

"Yes, they complain" about conditions, Coyne said. But she finds a surfeit of Iraqis who still want to learn what the institute has to teach—about how to peacefully manage religious and sectarian conflict, for example—and are willing to drive 11 or 12 hours through multiple dangerous checkpoints to get books and practical advice and lessons from other Iraqis.

To the families of American soldiers who are dying or at risk, there may be little comnar edying or at risk, there may be little comfort in knowing that Iraqis also are dying and putting themselves at risk. It may help only a bit more to realize that so many of them are committed to making democracy and tolerance work and that their successor would be not only the just outcome but in the U.S. national interest, too, Yet the courage of these ordinary !raqis is extraordinary.

It doesn't mean, of course, that they'll win.



Al

Iraqis Ahmed and Omar, right, check damage done to their neighbor's Baghdad home last week. A mortar had landed the night before, killing one person and injuring another.

The insurgents are testing the will of Americans and Iraqis alike; if U.S. and Iraqi forces cannot provide some measure of safety for election observers and college professors and women's rights campaigners, it won't matter that a majority of Iraqis want the insurgents to fail.

What is remarkable, though, is that despite the mistakes of the U.S. occupation, and despite the ruthlessness and brutality of the terrorists, so many Iraqis continue to stand up on the other side.

Coyne recently interviewed applicants for Fulbright grants, smart Iraqis willing to risk an association with a U.S. program because they dream of starting an Internet site, or a government watchdog organization, or a public health project. And when they're asked why they take the risk, they invariably answer, "Because it wasn't possible before."

One applicant was a young Kurdish man who graduated at the top of his high school class but, in Saddam Hussein's Iraq, was not permitted to go to university. He is coming forward now, he told Copne, "because this is my first best chance." She paused and added, "And maybe his last best chance."

red Hiatt is editor of The Post's editorial page

As world advances, Castro off on his own island

BY MARCELA SANCHEZ

The Washington Post

y mom arrived early for Christmas this year — hree weeks haead of time, in fact. Her visit and while it and the nature of mother-daughter dynamics do elicit some tension in our home, I'm grateful she is here.

I'm even more thankful when I consider how petty my concerns seem in comparison with those of people who cannot be with loved ones this season, separated as they are by distance, commitments and even by the whims of a tyrant.

Hilda Molina was one of Cuba's leading brain surgeons when she turned against the Cuban government in 1995, accusing it of trying to make a business of selling fetal brain tissue to foreigners suffering from Partisson's disease. Molina resigned her seat in parliament and her membership in the Communist Party in protest. For nearly a decade, she has vainly requested permission to visit about the protect of the protect of brain the protect of the protect of brain the protect brain the protect

Gloria Amaya is the mother of Miguel, Ariel and Guido Sigler Amaya, three of the now-famous 75 peaceful pro-democracy activists whose arrest and sentencing 20 months ago by the Castro government powwers charged with undermining "the Cuban socio-political project" by running an indpendent medical facility out of one of their homes. Because they dared treat the poor of a small town in Cuba with drugs manufactured in the United Sates, Fidel Castro Keeps them in jail and their families apart.

There has been no lack of international solidarity shown to those like the Molina and Amaya families. And both the hard-line and what is sometimes called soft diplomatic strategies employed by the international

community have elicited responses from Fidel Castro — but not the kind that have significantly mitigated the plight of Cuban dissidents

Argentine President Nestor Kirchner would like to believe that a policy of engagement is the way to soften Castro. Early this year, when the United Nations voted to censure Castro for his dreadful human rights record, Argentina abstained.

But when the opportunity came to cash in on the soft approach, Castro did not respond in kind. Despite diplomatic efforts that included a personal letter from Kircher asking Castro for a simple "humanitarian gesture," to let Molina visit her son and meet her Argentinean grandchildren, Castro refused. According to Molina, an immigration officer to diher she couldn't leave Cub by

cause her "brain is a national patrimony."
Washington rejects soft diplomacy, of
course. Those who attempt to engage Castro

run the risk of "humiliating themselves" or appearing "complicit" in Castro's abusive regime, said Roger Noriega, assistant secretary of state for the Western Hemisphere.

If the State Department thought there was a remote chance for a compromise, a U.S. of ficial said last week, it would try it. But Castro leaves the Bush administration no option but the hard line. The result is a virtual stalemate that has put Washington in the unfortunate position of keeping or strengthening harsh policies—including new travel restrictions to the island that also keep families apart this holiday season.

Tragically, this is the nature of policy with a tyrant. Unable to deal substantively with Castro, foreign leaders are constantly pushed to the fringes, so far away from any truly effective interaction or policy-making that what does occur borders on absurdity.

Most recently, Washington and Havana have been engaged in a battle over Christmas lights. The head of the U.S. Interests Section in Havana, James Cason, has decked the grounds with a flashy display that includes a snowman, a Santa Claus and a huge number 75, a not-so-subtle reminder of the most recent victims of Castro's repression. Castro retaliated by placing billiboards near the Interests Section with images of Abu Ghraib, swastikas and a "Made in the USA" sien.

In the most absurd of outcomes, Argentina opted not to recall its ambassador to Cuba for consultations on the best way to repudiate Castro's inflexibility over Molina. Instead, Kirchner fired the ambassador and the foreign ministry's chief of staff.

Molina, Amaya and their loved ones are pawns in a game that Castro has had more than four decades to master. Their stories and the stories of those who intend to help them remind us that there remains within our midst a type of injustice we seem impotent to confront

BY BRUCE TINSLEY

Mallard Fillmore

HILLARY:

"I RESOURE TO SUPPRESS MIRE A TEAR FROM MY EYE....
ELATION....

HILLARY:

"THAT VOTERS REJECTED JOHN KERRY."

SO I'LL FEIGN A SIGH....
WHIPE A TEAR FROM MY EYE....

ELATION....
IN FEBRUARY."

IN THE STATES

Rain still pounding California

By JOHN ANTCZAK The Associated Press

LOS ANGELES - More wet weather spread across California early Wednesday from a powerful Pacific storm that already had dumped record rainfall, snawned highway-blocking mudslides and shut off power for thousands of homes and businesses

Several major routes remained closed in Southern California

Northbound U.S. 101 was closed for about 20 miles because of a slide in Santa Barbara County, and snow shut down Interstate 5 at Tejon Pass north of Los Ange les. On Tuesday, the weather caused hundreds of crashes.

Heavy snow and high wind were possible Wednesday in the Sierra Nevada of Northern California. Locally heavy rain also moved into southern Nevada and parts of Arizona.

Los Angeles measured 5.55 inches of rain Tuesday, the most on record for any December day and the most for any time of the year since Jan. 26, 1956, when 5.71 inches fell, according to AccuWeather, which compiled National Weather Service data.



Los Angeles County firefighters Sally Ortega, left, and Eddie Arguelles escort an unidentified woman from her stranded car in Harbor City, Calif., on Tuesday, after a fierce storm flooded the area.

The city's wettest day on record was March 22, 1938, with 5.88 inches. The weather service started keeping records in 1877

Twelve to 13 inches of rain fell Tuesday in the Figueroa Mountain area of Santa Barbara County and in parts of Ventura County. officials said

The wind-driven rain was blamed for power outages that blacked out more than 100,000 customers Tuesday in Southern California

On Monday, San Francisco was hit by more than 3 inches of rain and Marin County got more than 7 inches. Wind gusting to more than 60 mph knocked out power to 80,000 customers in the Salinas area south of San Francisco.

Three deaths were believed to be linked to the weather, including a man who apparently tried to surf in the storm's high waves

FDA approves new, powerful painkiller

BY LAURA MECKLER The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Patients who suffer severe chronic pain and are no longer helped by morphine will soon have a new op-

The Food and Drug Administration on Tuesday approved the first in a new class of drugs that blocks the nerve channels responsible for transmitting pain signals. It will be marketed as Prialt and should be available by the end of January.

"When you've taken all the kinds of pain medication that there is and you still have pain, that is a very frightening situation," said Dr. Lars Ekman, president of research and development for the drug's Ireland-based manufacturer, Elan. "When you have that kind of pain, there is nowhere to go

The drug is part of a new class known as N-type calcium channel blockers. It is known chemically as ziconotide

Morphine is standard treatment for severe pain from cancer, AIDS, amputations and other sigeventually wear off and the dosage must be increased. At some point, many patients switch from taking medication by mouth or by injection to a microinfusion pump implanted under the skin that de livers drugs directly into the fluid surrounding the spinal cord

Ekman said 35,000 to 50,000 Americans have these pumps now. The FDA approved Prialt for patients who are already using these numns but not getting effective relief from them or who cannot tolerate the available treatments. There are side effects, and the

FDA was including a "black box" warning — the government's strongest warning short of a ban.

Side effects may include dizziess, drowsiness and altered mental status, with patients confused at times.

The idea for the drug came from a South Pacific snail called the Conus magus, which paralyzes its victims with venom after capturing them, the company said. Researchers set out to learn how to develop a drug based on this venom and eventually copied the amino acid sequence.



'Law & Order' star dead at 69 of cancer

BY FRAZIER MOORE

The Associated Press

NEW YORK - Actor Jerry Orbach, who played a sardonic, seen-it-all cop on TV's "Law & Order" and scored on Broadway as a song-and-dance man, has died of prostate cancer at 69, a representative of the show said Wednesday.

Orbach died Tuesday night in Manhattan after several weeks of treatment, Audrey Davis of the public relations agency Lippin Group said. When his illness was diag-

nosed, he had begun production

on NBC's upcoming spinoff "Law & Order: Trial By Jury," after 12 seasons playing Detective Lennie Briscoe in the original series. His return to the new show had been expected early next year.

On Broadway, the Bronx-born Orbach starred in hit musicals including "Carnival," "Promises, Promises" (for which he won a Tony Award), "Chicago" and "42nd Street."

Earlier, he was in the original cast of the off-off-Broadway hit "The Fantasticks," playing the narrator. The show went on to run for more than 40 years.

Among his film appearances were roles in "Dirty Dancing,"
"Prince of the City" and "Crimes and Misdemeanors.

Orbach is expected to appear in early episodes of "Law & Order: Trial by Jury," for which he continued as Briscoe in a secondary role, when the series premieres later this season. Davis said.

"I'm immensely saddened by the passing of not only a friend and colleague, but a legendary figure of 20th century show busi-ness," said Dick Wolf, creator and executive producer of the "Law & Order" series, in a statement.

"He was one of the most honored performers of his generation. His loss is irreplaceable."

In a 2000 Associated Press interview, Orbach said the role in the acclaimed "Law & Order" brought him "wonderful security," rare in the life of an actor.

He said he didn't know "where I stop and Lennie starts, really. . I know he's tougher than me and he carries a gun. And I'm not an alcoholic '

"I know I wouldn't want to be him," Orbach summed up. guess THAT'S where I stop and he starts.

Author and activist Susan Sontag dies

BY HILLEL ITALIE The Associated Press

NEW YORK - Susan Sontag, a leading intellectual and activist of the past half century who influenced the way many thought about art, illness and photography, died Tuesday.

Sontag died Tuesday, said Esther Carver, a spokeswoman for Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center in Manhattan. Her son, David Rieff, said the cause was complications of one of the deadliest forms of leukemia. Sontag had suffered off and on from cancer since the

"I knew Susan since 1962 and I know how much she suffered and how brave she was facing her illness," fellow author Carlos Fuentes told The Associated Press in Mexico City.

Tall and commanding, her very presence suggested grand, passionate drama: eyes the richest brown; thick, black hair accented by a bolt of white; the voice deep and assured; her expression a severe stare or a wry smile, as if amused by a joke only she could tell.

She wrote a best-selling historical novel, The Volcano Lover," and in 2000 won the National Book Award for the historical novel "In America." But her greatest literary impact was as an essayist.

Her 1964 piece, "Notes on Camp," which es tablished her as a major new writer, popularized the "so bad it's good" attitude toward pop-ular culture, applicable to everything from

"Swan Lake" to feather boas. In "Against In-terpretation," this most analytical of writers worried that critical analysis interfered with art's "incantatory, magical" power.

She also wrote such influential works as "Illness as Metaphor," in which she examined how disease had been alternatively romanticized and demonized, and "On Photography, in which she argued pictures sometimes distance viewers from the subject matter. "On Photography" received a National Book Crit-ics Circle award in 1978. "Regarding the Pain of Others," a partial refutation of "On Photography," was an NBCC finalist in 2004.

Sontag was deeply involved in politics and campaigned for human rights. From 1987-89, she served as president of the American chapter of the writers organization PEN





Pentagon Car Sales

... GERMANY

KAISERSLAUTERN

Kaiserstrasse 1 67661 Kaiserslautern Tel: 0631 351 900

HEIDELBERG

Hebelstrasse 3 69115 Heidelberg Tel: 06221 144 911

MANNHEIM

Waldeckweg 3 68309 Mannheim Tel: 0621 724 6901

WIESBADEN / MAINZ

Ludwig-Wolker-Str. 14 55252 Mainz-Kastel Tel: 06134 567 800

...ITALY

AVIANO

Via Pordenone 48D Aviono (PN) 33081 Tel: 0434 676 613/4

Viale Della Pace 254B Vicenza (VI) 36100 Tel: 0444 305 888

Via Eduardo Scarfoglio, 7/f 80125 Naples Tel: 081 762 3868

SIGONELLA

c/o Hotel Sigonella Inn Suite 101/102 opposite NAS 1 95040 Motta S. Anastasia (CT) Tel: 095 713 0410

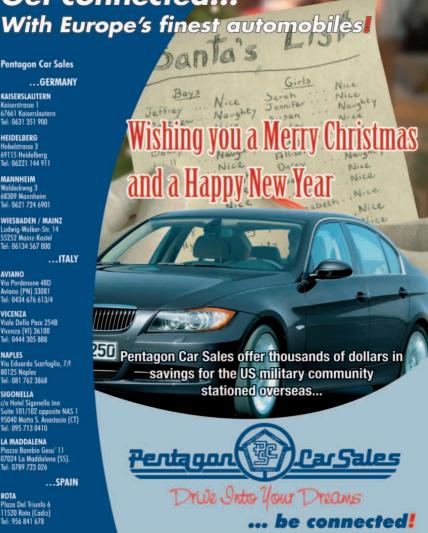
LA MADDALENA

Piazza Bambin Gesu' 11 07024 La Maddalena (SS) Tel: 0789 723 026

...SPAIN

ROTA

Plaza Del Triunfo 6 11520 Rota (Cadiz) Tel: 956 841 678



PAGE 16 · Stars and Strip

Club faces fine

GA ATLANTA — The mayor is threatening a country club with up to \$90,000 in fines for refusing to extend spousal benefits to the partners of gay members.

Mayor Shirley Franklin said in a letter to the Druid Hills Golf Club that the club violated Atlanta's human rights ordinance, which re-

quires businesses to treat domestic partners registered with the city as married couples.

Franklin said she is ordering the city solicitor to fine the club \$500 a day for up to six months — a total of \$90,000 — unless the rule is changed. The solicitor will decide when the fines will begin.

Windy business

MA BOSTON — Town leaders in the Cape Cod community of Yarmouth have long been on record opposing the wind farm proposed for the waters off its beaches, even passing a resolution two years ago expressing their disapproval for the plan to erect 130 wind turbines in Nantucket Sound.

But the Yarmouth Board of Selectmen also quietly negotiated with Cape Wind Associates for a raft of benefits worth millions. The the \$700 million project gets federal and state approval, underwater transmission lines would come ashore in Yarmouth and tie into the electrical grid.

"We did it essentially to protect Yarmouth," said Suzanne McAuliffe, chairwoman of the Board of Selectman. "We don't have a say in the actual wind farm, whether its going to happen or not."

Botulism sales banned

FI FORT LAUDERDALE — Two doctors and their Arizona company were barred from selling an unapproved botulism toxin believed to have paralyzed four people who used it instead of Botox, the popular anti-wrinkle treatment.

Doctors Chad Livdahl and Zarah Karim, of Toxin Research International Inc., do not have government approval for the "use, sale, marketing and promotion" of the toxin for treating wrinkles, according to a statement from U.S. Attorney Marcos Jimenez in Miami.

Ån emergency restraining order against the company and doctors also covers three sister companies: Powderz Inc., The Cosmetic Pharmacy Inc. and Z Spa Inc.

Language barrier

BURLINGTON — Advocates for Vermont's growing number of foreign language interpreters say the workers need legal protection so they won't have to testify in court about their jobs. Sylvia Delcastillo-Alzamora, a

Spanish-English translator, says testifying about her work "would be betraying the ethics of the profession."

Professional interpreters adhere to a code, she said, that prohibits them from publicly discussing or offering opinions about their conversations with clients.

Currently, Vermont law offers foreign-language interpreters no protection from being called as witnesses in cases in which they were first asked to translate words from the first asked to the f



one language to another.

Suspected pot in trailer

ROUNDUP

AR VAN BUREN — After he ran from police twice, authorities have arrested a Massachusetts man who is accused of carrying 27 packages of suspected marijuana nested in bales of hay inside a horse trailer.

State police say Everton Garriques was a passenger in the vehicle pulling the trailer, which also contained two horses. More than 800 pounds of suspected marijuana was found in the Christmas Day

Arkansas State Police Cpl. Olen Craig stopped the pickup truck for speeding and having no license plate light, an ASP dispatcher said.

Man survives fall

OH MEDINA — A man whose car plunged 30 feet off a highway overpass and landed wheels down in the snow-covered median between lanes of freeway traffic escaped with only minor in-

juries.
"The front air bag deployed and right after that I felt a floating sensation," Michael Doner said. "I thought, Tm either dreaming or I'm falling."

Doner, 60, of Medina, was making the three-hour drive to visit his mother on Christmas when a car skidded into his and a second car



Protecting ice wines
Bottles of ice wine, made from

frozen grapes, rest on a table at Mazza Vineyards in North East, Pa. An intense cold snap has sent Great Lakes vineyard workers scurrying to pick by hand the frozen pearls that will be pressed into ice wine, known as "honey in a hottle" or "hectar of the sods." slammed into him, sending his car over the railing of the bridge over Interstate 71 about 30 miles southwest of Cleveland.

Doner had a broken collarbone and cracked ribs, and was sent home less than six hours after the fall. "I'm very lucky," he said. "The guy upstairs was looking out for me."

Elvis' backwash

BELMONT — Wade Jones likes Elvis, but he insists he's just a casual fan.

That's why, after watching a grilled cheese sandwich thought to be embedded with the image of the Virgin Mary fetch \$28,000 on eBay, he decided to part with three tablespoons of water from a cup he says Elvis Presley used during a concert.

"It's one thing to be an Elvis fan,

but then you tell them you have this cup and water and they think you're a fanatic," he said. "I'm not like the people bidding on this water."

Jones was 13 when he went to see the aging Elvis in February 1977 at the old Charlotte Coliseum, which is now Cricket Arena. He saw the pop icon drink from the cup and, after the show, asked a police officer for it.

As proof of its authenticity, Jones provides photos of Elvis during the concert in which cups can be seen.

Found after 23 years

CA SACRAMENTO — A vintage 1963 Ford Fairlane stolen 23 years ago from Greenville, S.C., has turned up some 2,600 miles away in California.

California Highway Patrol officers called Terry and Robin Smith to tell them authorities had recovered the vehicle.

"What a wonderful gift at Christmastime ... after 23 years to receive news that they'd found our car," Robin Smith said.

Someone brought the car into the CHP's San Bernardino office for inspection. A sharp-eyed officer noticed the car's identification number didn't match and began in-

vestigating.
CHP's Lt. Greg Williams said authorities don't believe the people who brought the car in had anything to do with the theft.

Smith said the car was a wedding gift from her parents, but the couple have not decided whether to bring it home or sell it in Califor-

Ferret recovery efforts

PHOENIX — Endangered black-footed ferrets are reproducing more and surviving longer in the wild in Arizona than they have since recovery efforts began nearly a decade ago, wildlife biologists sav.

Biologists found 28 ferrets in the last two years in Arizona that were born in the wild — more than double the number found during any two-year period since a reintroduction program began in 1996.

"The success in Arizona is great," said Mike Lockhart, a ferret recovery coordinator for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. "If it continues along the same path, it could quickly become a

self-sustaining population."



Horsing around Horses play in their pasture at Sweet Tree



Mill in the mist Smoke rises from the International Steel Group steelmill in Sparrows Point, Md.



Supporting the arts Workers with Premier Outdoor Enterprises Inc. support extensions as they work on a billboard for the Kansas City Ballet in Kansas City, Mo.



Thomas Chapman of Long Beach, Calif., sits on the sand south of the Seal Beach, Calif., Surf's up pier as he rests between rides on his body board.



Matthew Witt, 1, looks at the hoop as he Little big shot plays with a basketball in Carey Park while enjoying the day with his parents, Michael and Debra, in Hutchinson, Kan.



Incredible ride Visitors ride the Incredible Hulk Coaster at Universal's Islands of Adventure in Orlando, Fla.



Three monk parakeets brace themselves against a stiff breeze as they perch on a Wind riders wire in Surfeide Fla

Surrogate of 3 at age 55

VA RICHMOND — A 55-year-old woman acting as a surrogate for her daughter gave birth to triplets.

Tina Cade, who already had three children, delivered the babies by Caesarean section at Bon Secours St. Mary's Hospital.

She had carried the babies for her oldest daughter, Camille Hammond, who suffers from endometriosis, a condition affecting the lining of the uterus that makes it difficult to become pregnant.

Hammond and her husband, both doctors at Johns Honkins University in Baltimore, had tried for four years to become pregnant. Cade started hormone treatment

last winter, and in the spring she underwent test-tube fertilization. Three embryos were implanted and all three survived.

"We didn't plan for triplets," Cade said recently. "I thought we would be blessed with one. It was quite a surprise.

Christmas mail stolen

ND FARGO — Police say thieves pried open banks of mailboxes in at least 19 apartment buildings on this city's south side over the holiday, probably looking

for money in Christmas cards.

Authorities say the thieves gained access to the mail of more than 100 tenants. They're still trying to determine how much was

Woodlands preserved

VT BRATTLEBORO group of townspeople has raised the money needed to buy 31 acres of woodlands in the heart of the town that will be preserved as a popular area for hikers and cross country skiers.

Ownership of the land was transferred to the nonprofit Windham Foundation and the Vermont Land Trust, and the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board holds an easement on the land.

"For the past 20 or 30 years, the land has been unofficially used for hikes and nature walks," explained Tom Marten of Brattleboro, a member of the group Friends of the Western Avenue Woodlands, which formed last year to conserve the land. "This is land that ought to be conserved so it can continue to be used.

With little street-side frontage and plenty of hilly and rocky areas, the land was not prime for development, although Marten said it is excellent for recreational activities such as biking, walking and nature

The land — which was mostly pasture just more than 100 years ago - is known to have plenty of deer, birds and some aquatic life.

Weed grower sniffed out

CO BOULDER — A bank teller's nose led authorities to a substantial marijuana-growing operation.

An employee at the First National Bank of Colorado called authorities after processing several cash deposits that reeked of the illegal weed. The Boulder County Drug Task Force followed up the tip with a search of a home that resulted in the discovery of more than 6 pounds of packaged marijuana and 270 plants and pieces of plants.

Michael Bruce Bliss, 30, was ar-

rested at the home and has been charged in the case. Bliss frequented the bank weekly, according to a search warrant with denosits of \$20 bills in amounts of \$800 to \$1.500

Flouride fight

AR LITTLE ROCK — A fight is brewing over a legislator's suggestion that the state's water supply be fluoridated.

Rep. Tommy Roebuck said he may introduce a bill to require all communities to fluoridate their water.

Opponent Sherry Johnson, president of the Arkansas Health Freedom Coalition, said, "If you want fluoride, go to the dentist and get fluoride.

School's board selection

AL AUBURN — A panel reviewing 30 names to fill a single vacancy on the Auburn University board of trustees expects to select its choice by Feb. 1, when the Legislature meets.

The five-member trustee selection panel has begun interviews for the at-large vacancy. The Alahama Senate will vote on their choice.

Election baby welcomed

NH MEREDITH — A couple who stopped at Town Hall to vote just hours before the birth of their son have been rewarded for their loyalty by President Bush, who penned a personal note welcoming the baby.

Kim Dixon waited in the car while her husband. Shawn. dropped off their absentee ballots on Nov. 2. Tyler McPherson Dixon arrived at 6:43 p.m., weighing in at 9 lbs.

"In the late stages of labor, our only entertainment was watching the election returns," Shawn Divon said In the days before Tyler's birth.

Dixon had drawn a portrait of the president, framed it and mailed it to the White House with a letter thanking Bush for keeping America safe and telling him about the

"We wanted to do something to say thank you. We were concerned about bringing a haby into the world. He was the guy making us feel safe " Divon said

Schools to combine

WA EVERETT — Five Christian schools are combining to create a new school system in Snohomish County and north Seat-

The schools have more than 1,200 students. By combining resources school officials hope to offer more specialized classes such as advanced placement courses for college-bound students.

Hot line shut down

RI PROVIDENCE — The state's AIDS hot line is going dead after 18 years.

It has experienced less demand as people seek information elsewhere. The hot line received up to 5,000 calls a year until the mid-1990s but only about 500 this

Callers will instead reach a na tional hot line operated by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Stories and photos from wire services

FACES

Emmerich judging in Berlin

Roland Emmerich, the director of "Independence Day" and "The Day After Tomorrow," will head the jury at the Berlin Film Festival in Febru-

Eleven films already have been selected to run in the festival's main competition. They include "The Life Aquatic With Steve Zissou," a new comedy from Wes Anderson, and "Les Temps qui changent" (Changing Times), directed by Andre Techine and starring Catherine Deneuve and Gerard Depardieu

A festival statement last week said Emmerich, a native of Germany, would head the jury that will award the top Golden Bear prize, but gave no details of its other members



Organizers already have announced that the world premiere of French director Regis Wargnier's "Man to Man, a historical adventure epic that stars Joseph Fiennes and Kristin Scott Thomas, will open the 2005 festival - its 55th edition - on Feb. 10. The event closes Feb. 20

Jet Li injured in tsunami

Action star Jet Li injured his foot as he protected his daughter from tsunami waves that flooded his hotel in the Maldives, Hong Kong newspapers reported Tuesday.

Li, who played the villain in 1998's "Lethal Weapon 4," was with his



daughter in the hotel's lobby Sunday when huge waves gushed into the hotel, the Apple Daily newspaper reported, quoting a friend vacationing with Li He slightly injured his foot while

picking up his daughter, the report said. Ming Pao Daily News reported Li struck his foot against a floating niece of furniture

Li made his name in Hong Kong as a martial arts film star before moving on to Hollywood. His screen credits include "Romeo Must Die" and "Hero."

Gayheart steels up for play

Actress Rebecca Gavheart, who gained popularity as the "Noxzema girl" in the skin care company's ads, has joined the cast of "Steel Magnolias," opening on Broadway in April.

Gayheart, 32, appeared on the TV show "Beverly Hills, 90210" in the 1990s, and has more re-

cently been seen on the FX series "Nip/Tuck" and Showtime's "Dead Like Me." Her movie credits include 'Scream 2" and "Urban Legend

She will play bride-to-be Shelby, the role portrayed by Julia Roberts in the 1989 movie version of Robert Harling's play, it was announced

Also in the Broadway cast is Delta Burke as Truvy, the owner of a Louisiana beauty parlor, which is where "Steel Magnolias" is set. The production, directed by Jason Moore, be



gins preview performances March 15 at the Lyceum Theatre and opens April 4

'Fat Albert' fears typecasting

Kenan Thompson, who plays the title role in the new 'Fat Albert" movie, hopes he doesn't get typecast.

"You always gotta watch yourself when you're playing like such an iconic character because you don't want to be trying to audition for something else and all anybody wants to do is 'Hey! Hey! ... and kick you out of the audi tion," Thompson recently told report-ers, according to AP Radio.

The live-action film, directed by Joel Zwick, is based on the animated TV series that comedian Bill Cosby created in the 1970s about adoles cents growing up in Philadelphia

Thompson said he wore a form-fitting fat suit to play the role.
"I had all this belly to get around

and a little more booty, but you know it was cool," the 26-year-old actor-comedian said

Stories and photos from The Associated Press



Flying high again

DiCaprio hits screen with latest epic, 'The Aviator'

BY DAVID GERMAIN

The Associated Press

LOS ANGELES - Leonardo DiCaprio likes to think he and buddy Martin Scorsese share at least some of the obsessive fixations of Howard Hughes, the subject of their latest collaboration, "The Aviator

Living through a mammoth project when it looks like it might capsize, as DiCaprio did with "Titanic," which went on to become the biggest modern blockbuster.

Becoming so engrossed in a story it occupies years of your life and requires a massive resurrection of another era, as Scorsese did with "Gangs of New York," which took 25 years to develop and a colossal construction job to re-create 19th-century Manhattan.

"The Aviator" screenplay hooked them from the start, with an early sequence detailing Hughes' fanatic devotion to his World War I film "Hell's Angels." Using his own money, Hughes spent \$4 million on the 1930 film, at the time the biggest movie budget ever, and reshot it for sound after deciding the silent era was finished.

"I think Marty and I can both relate to, when we read the script, we both immediately read 'Hell's Angels, year three,' We were like, wow, we know what that's like, being a part of an epic that just goes on and on and on." DiCaprio said in an interview with The Associated Press. "Persevering against all the odds and trying to make the best film, being a perfectionist, trying to make the story the best it can be.

"I certainly can't imagine taking things to the level Hughes did in his life. It's too exhausting. The man led 20 different lifetimes in one life.

"The Aviator" casts DiCaprio as Hughes during his scrappy years from the late 1920s to late 1940s, when he fought the Hollywood establishment and pushed bounds on sex and violence in film, dated parades of starlets, and oversaw creation of the world's biggest and fastest planes.

Cate Blanchett co-stars as Katharine Hepburn, whom Hughes dated for three years. Kate Beckinsale plays Ava Gardner, another of his longtime companions.

The film hints at the Hughes of later years, the cloistered multimillionaire with long hair and fingernails, terrified of germs and locked in a hotel room surrounded by tissue hoves

It's the image of the freakish recluse that DiCaprio, 30, grew up with when it came to Hughes, who died in 1976. Then about eight years ago, DiCaprio read a biography of Hughes and became fascinated with the scope of his achievements and the conflict between his public image as a playboy and daredevil and private life as a man increasingly paralyzed by phobias.

DiCaprio initially developed "The Aviator" with Michael Mann, who decided against directing it after back-to-back film biographies in "Ali" and "The Insider." The actor pitched the script to his "Gangs of New York" director Scorsese, who guickly signed on for "The Aviator,

Like Howard Hughes, who loathed being under the public lens at Hollywood premieres, DiCaprio has learned to live uneasily with tabloid celebrity.

"I hate being bothered by paparazzi. Anyone would," Di-Caprio said. "The flip side of that coin, I'm one lucky bastard, and I have nothing to complain about. People are dealing with problems around the world that are infinitely more complicated and much more extreme than anything having to do with a couple of crummy photographers. I'm not one to complain about it too much.

DiCaprio shuns questions about his personal life, tersely denving recent rumors that he split with his girlfriend, Brazilian supermodel Gisele Bundchen.

When it comes to his Oscar prospects on "The Aviator, DiCaprio is more forthcoming than most actors, who tend to insist demurely they never think about awards. After his academy recognition for "What's Eating Gilbert Grape," DiCaprio has been snubbed since, missing out on nomina-tions with "Titanic," "Catch Me If You Can" and "Gangs of New York," films that put his co-stars in the Oscar race.

Does he feel overlooked by his peers come Oscar time? "Mmm, maybe," DiCaprio said. "But you do these films and you throw it out to the public, and it's up everyone else to figure out whether they think it is worthy of something like that or not. ...

Ultimately, DiCaprio said his greatest reward is to be part of films that might stand the test of time and bear repeated viewings decades down the line.

"There are certain films out there, that's the reason I get so excited about doing movies, that hopefully I can be part of a film that people 50 years from now will be able to still want to watch. That's what's exciting to me."

YOUR MONEY

IT free agents' field is green

Contractors sitting pretty in the new business model

BY JANE S. HILL

The Dallas Morning News

DALLAS — When Gordon Davis calls himself "a pirate in the sea of capitalism," he's not talking about plundering trade secrets. He's an information technology contractor, charting his

own course in search of gold.
Changes in the way companies
do business — looking to outside
talent to tackle IT projects — create work for independent contractors such as Davis. As a result, more IT professionals are
learning the ins and outs of contracting.

At CareerConnection, a Dallas-based support group for job seekers, Lisa Miller fields inquiries from firms seeking IT professionals. At least 70 percent to 80 percent of those job inquiries are for contract positions, she said.

Miller calls the contractor arrangement a "dating game," in which both company and worker are snared commitment

are spared commitment.

She understands the value of using temporary workers for sea-

sonal employment, she said, but IT pros are not like summer lifeguards. For starters, they work on longer projects; some contracts last for years.

Veteran contractors such as Davis say they don't get attached to the projects or to the compa-

While working on a three-year contract at Micrografx Inc., he went in every day as if it could be his last. "I did the best job I could, but in the back of my mind I knew if they told me today was my last day, I would walk out with no disappointment."

Compensation is one difference. As an hourly worker at Micrografx, Davis was paid for overtime, which made the position more lucrative for him than for some salaried employees, he said. But he had no benefits. Vacation and holiday pay, as well as sick leave, are virtually nonexistent for contractors.

In a contract position for the Federal Reserve Bank, he did receive medical benefits. The



project lasted one year but was supposed to be longer, illustrating another vagary of being a contractor. he said.

Just as they withhold loyalty to a company, contractors also jump from one placement firm to

another as standard practice.
Davis advises contractors to stay in contact with "a dozen or more" placement firms, because when the assignment is over, there's no promise of another one waiting.

Also, save money for contingencies, he said. "You have to see yourself as a small-business owner. Sometimes you're going to be living on the edge. A lot of people aren't prepared to do

He networks "voraciously," a requirement for any successful contractor, he said. Reading job boards alone won't get you the job, he insists.

Companies use brokers to find temporary workers for several reasons, but efficiency and legal concerns top the list. Hiring managers would rather deal with a small number of contracting firms than sift through several thousand résumés. Also, the Fixed-Term Work Act of 2003 requires companies to treat fixed-term workers counsult with

other considerations. Temporary agency workers are exempt under the federal act. Contract placement firms may hire the worker directly, issuing pavchecks and taking care of tax

permanent employees in terms

of pay, pensions, benefits and

and Social Security withholding.
Other firms pay contractors as
if they are self-employed, using a
1099 form, leaving the worker to
pay estimated taxes and Social
Security.

John Dyer, a software developer, has been working as a contractor for most of his career, "long before it was fashionable." the advises would-be contractors to build a network of contacts in the TI industry and within their professional society. He attends local chapter meetings for the Independent Computer Consultants Associations.

Get to know recruiters at several placement firms, check job boards and keep your skills curwould walk out with
no disappointment."

DALIAS MORNING
NEWS/RT

rent, Dyer said. "You should be
planning for your next job in any

Gordon Davis, an IT

contractor, advises temporary workers to stay in touch with many placement firms. He says he

doesn't get attached to projects or firms. Of a recent assignment, he says: "I did the best job I could, but ... I knew

if they told me today was my last day, I

job, always asking yourself, 'What's going to happen when this job ends?' " Marie Guthrie, vice president

Marie Guthrie, vice president in the Fort Worth, Texas, office of DBM, a human resources consulting firm, refers to IT contractors as "pioneers in the new employment model" where companies have only a small core group of full-time employees and hire IT workers on a project basis.

Down the road, she predicts, contracting firms may act as bro-kers for IT professionals, or agent managers will represent IT talent, much as agents in Hollywood promote actors. "Some forecasters say there will be on line bidding for top talent."

From large retailers to hospitals, companies will continue to look for ways to reduce costs through improved systems, she said, requiring them to make heavy investments in technology.

IT contract professionals, working as free agents, will find themselves in the "driver's seat," Guthrie said. "The upturn has already started. This is a permanent change. The old model is not coming back."

TUESDAY'S MARKET SUMMARY

INDEXES						
52- High	week Low	Name	Last	Net Chg	% Y	TD 52-wk ing % Chg
10,868.07 3,803.75	9,708.40 2,743.46	Dow Jones Industrials Dow Jones Transportation	10,854.54 3,811.62	+78.41 +57.39	+1.53 +26	
337.03 7,229.73	259.08 6,211.33	Dow Jones Utilities NYSE Composite	335.70 7,245.81	+2.04 +48.54	+.61 +25 +.67 +12	2.51 +12.78
1,428.01 2,171.94	1,150.74	Amex Index Nasdag Composite	1,426.38 2,177.19	+1.68 +22.97	+.12 +21	1.68 +8.32
1,214.17 659.73	1,060.72	S&P 500 S&P MidCap	1,213.54	+8.62 +8.00	+.72 +9	0.14 +9.36 0.01 +14.32
651.72 11,971.46	515.90 10,268.52	Russell 2000 DJ Wilshire 5000	654.57 11,981.40	+10.23 +100.03	+1.59 +17 +.84 +10	
	MVCE	٨٠	AFV		Nasna	0

NYSE				Аме	X		Nasdaq				
Most	ACTIVE	(\$1 or	MORE)	Most	ACTIVE	(\$1 or	MORE)	Most	ACTIVE	(\$1 or	MORE)
Name	Vol (00)	Last	Chg	Name	Vol (00)	Last	Chg	Name	Voi (00)	Last	Chg
Pfizer Lucent XTO Egy s GenElec NortelN If ExxonMbl TimeWarn SpmtFON Agere OwestCm	417772 262857 210174 125529 125056 109625 101292 90225 85330	26.94 3.74 35.05 36.69 3.44 51.05 19.55 24.83 1.30 4.54	+.44 02 +.27 +.12 01 +.17 +.11 	SPDR SemiHTr iShJapan iShRs2000 DHB Inds DJIA Diam SP Engy Wyndham AlphaPro RemaGold	40789 34372 21946	121.18 32.80 10.82 130.05 19.48 108.40 36.12 1.09 2.09 3.08	+.66 +.12 +.21 +1.70 42 +.64 +.25 +.02 +.49	SiriusS Nasd100Tr Microsoft Intel SunMicro Pharmos Oracle Cisco JDS Uniph TaylrDy	1085410 591741 545929 411969 402309 354562 342414 333891 283287 278219	7.81 39.97 26.95 23.28 5.37 1.53 13.84 19.26 3.04 6.27	29 +.38 +.10 09 14 +.35 +.19 04 +.01

Name	Div	PE	Last	Chg	ΥΠ. %Chg
Alliant Technosystem		17	66.75	+.78	+15.6
Armor Holdings		31	47.85	+1.10	+81.5
Boeing	1.00	15	53.25	+.10	+26.4
Computer Sciences		19	56.10	+.52	+26.8
Engineered Sup Sys	.07	22	59.90	+.85	+8.8
General Dynamics	1.44	18	106.88	+1.28	+18.2
General Electric	.88	24	36.69	+.12	+18.4
Halliburton	.50		39.29	+.43	+51.1
Harris Corp.	.48	28	61.92	+.75	+63.2
Allied Signal	.83	22	36.07	+.36	+7.5
L-3 Communications	.40	22	75.19	+.69	+46.4
Lockheed Martin	1.00	20	56.76	62	+10.4
NorthrpG s	.92	20	56.07	+.11	+17.3
Raytheon	.80	45	39.56	+.31	+31.7
Rockwell Intl.	.66	23	49.50	+.39	+39.0
Segua Corp.		37	61.70	+1.27	+25.5
Texas Instruments	.10	22	23.90	+.10	-18.7
Textron Inc.	1.40	32	73.66	+.07	+29.1
United Technologies	1.40	19	104.74	+.47	+10.5

KEY MUTUA	AL FU	NDS	YTD
Name	NAV	Chg.	%Ret
Fidelity Invest: GroInc	38.28	+.24	+10.0
Fidelity Invest: GroCo	56.09	+.62	+12.2
Amer Century Inv: Ultra	29.57	+.32	+11.0
Fidelity Spartan: Eqidx	42.90	+.30	+10.8
Putnam Funds A: GrinA p	19.43	+.13	+11.1
Fidelity Invest: A Mgr	16.20 34.15	+.06	+5.3
Frank/Temp Frnk A: SMCpGrA AIM Investments A: Const p	22.87	+.41	+13.0
AiM investments A: Corex p Fidelity Invest: USBI	11.11		+4.0
Fidelity Invest: Ovrsea	35.22	+.21	+13.0
Fidelity Advisor T: GrOopT	30.55	+.21	+7.0
Fidelity Advisor T: EpinT	28.34	+.19	+113
Scudder Funds St GroineS	21.93	+.14	+10.0
Putnam Funds A: GlbEgty p	8.41	+.05	+13.
AIM Investments A: WeingA p	13.05	+.12	+8,1
AIM Investments A: ChartA p	12.81	+.07	+8.
Merrill Lynch I: BalCapl	26.68	+.11	+8.
Scudder Funds S: Intl FdS_	44.21	+.20	+16.
Fidelity Advisor T: OvrseaT Lord Abbett A: DevGtA p	17.68 16.00	+.11	+12.
Scudder Funds St. Income S	12.95		+4.
Merrill Lynch I: USGvtMtg	10.24		+4.2
Scudder Funds S: Devel	19.51	+ 21	+3.6
Putnam Funds A: GIGVA p	13.19	03	+9.7

EXCHANGE RATES

Euro costs\$1.3960	П
Dollar buys #0.7163	П
British nound \$1.98	П
Jananese ven (Dec 30) 101.00	П
British pound	П
Commercial vates	П
Debade (Disea)	П
Beltich pound \$1,0209	П
One of a (Dellar)	П
Bahrain (Dinar) 0.377 British pound \$1,9296 Canada (Dollar) 1.2163 Denmark (Krone) 5.16	П
Denmark (Krone)5.16	П
Egypt (Pound)	П
Egypt (Pound)	П
Hong Kong (Dollar)7.7729	П
Hungary (Forint)	П
Iceland (Krona)61.695	П
Israel (Shekel)4.3346	П
Japan (Yen)103.03	П
Kuwait (Dinar)0.29474	П
Norway (Krone) 5.73	П
Japan (Yen) 103.03 Kuwait (Dinar) 0.29474 Norway (Krone) 5,73 Philippines (Peso) 56.27	П
Saudi Arabia (Riyal) 3.59 Singapore (Dollar) 1.6336 South Korea (Won) 1.042.40 Switzerland (Franc) 1.07	П
Singapore (Dollar)1.6336	П
South Korea (Won)	П
Switzerland (Franc) 1.07	П
	П
	П
(Military exchange rates are those	П
available to customers at military bank-	П
ing facilities in the country of issuance	П
for Japan, South Korea, Germany, the	П
Netherlands and the United Kingdom.	П
For nonlocal currency exchange rates	П
(i.e., purchasing British pounds in Germa-	П
ny), check with your local military bank-	П
ing facility. Commercial rates are inter-	П
bank rates provided for reference when	П
buving currency. All figures are foreign	П
currencies to one dollar, except for the	П
currencies to one dollar, except for the	П
British pound, which is represented in	П
dollars-to-pound, and the euro, which is	П

PRECIOUS METALS

INTEREST RATES

Prime rate	5.2
Discount rate	3.2
Federal funds market rate	2.7
3-month bill	_2.2
30-year bond	_4.9
Sources The Accordated Drece Ro	nk e

Cents and Sensibility Money tip of the day

Thinking about new job?

The Associated Press

As the new year dawns, plenty of workers resolve to explore their career options, hoping to land a new job or improve the one you have. But there are several factors to consider before you mail your résumé through out your industry, advises Right Management Consultants, a Philadelphia-based career transition

For example, you might want to think about your company, and how it ranks alongside competitors that you might apply to. So, ask yourself these questions:

firm

■ Is your company respected in the industry? ■ Are sales rising, or drop-

ping?

Is the company an innovator, or one that's fallen behind the industry?

■ Does your company have a strategic plan, and have you read it?

Have salaries at your company kept pace, or lagged those paid by competitors?

After mulling some of these questions, you need to consider your personal relationship with your job, said Doug Matthews, executive vice president and head of career transition services for Right Management Con-

Is your workload in conflict with your personal life? Does the job satisfy you, or do you dread it? Is your employer using your skills wisely? Do you find yourself regularly pondering some thing else — a new industry, new job tasks, a smaller company or a role that's less demand-



EUROPEAN FORECAST

Benelux: Mostly cloudy with rain showers. Highs in the upper 40s. Friday lows in the upper 30s.

Britain, Ireland: Mostly cloudy with isolated rainshowers. Highs in the mid-40s to upper 50s, Friday lows in

the upper 30s to mid 40s. Croatia and Bosnia: Mostly cloudy with rain and snow mix. Highs in the lower 30s, Friday lows in the lower to

France: Partly cloudy with isolated rainshowers. Highs in the upper 40s to lower 50s, Friday lows in the upper 30s to mid 40s.

Northern Germany: Mostly cloudy with isolated rainshowers. Highs in the upper 30s to lower 40s, Friday lows in the lower to mid 30s.

Southern Germany: Cloudy with iso-lated rainshowers. Highs in the mid to upper 30s, Friday lows in the upper 20s to mid 30s.

Hungary: Partly cloudy with isolated snowshowers. Highs in the mid 30s, Friday lows in the lower 20s.

Northern Italy: Partly cloudy. Highs in the low 50s, Friday lows in the

upper 30s. Southern Italy: Partly cloudy with iso-lated thunderstorms. Highs in the mid to upper 50s, Friday lows in the mid 30s to low 40s.

Kosovo: Mostly cloudy. Highs in the mid-30s, Friday lows in the lower 20s to lower 30s

Norway: Partly cloudy with isolated rainshowers. Highs in the mid 40s to rainshowers. Highs in the mid 40s to lower 50s, Friday lows in the mid 20s to upper 30s.

Portugal, Spain: Partly cloudy. Highs in the mid-50s to lower 60s, Friday lows in the mid 30s to mid 40s.

Turkey: Partly cloudy with isolated rainshowers. Highs in the lower 50s to lower 60s, Friday lows in the mid 40s.

For current weather watches, warnings, and 5-day forecasts go to the USAFE Operational Weather Squadron home

https://ows.sembach.af.mil http://ows.public.sembach.af.mil

SUN & MOON

66 First qtr. Full moon 25 Jan 05

65 74 New Delhi 72/53 78/53 50/31 LO 73 41 24 43 71 11 23 63 41 HI 48 68 29 74 64 88 37 65 47/27 40 50 11 58 63 72 27 46 45 85 69 29 64 84 33 37 76 59 87/57 Karac 78/51 THE UNITED STATES TODAY

TODAY'S STATESIDE OUTLOOK

AFRICA

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MIDEAST

Scheduled to ETS or PCS Check our Relocation Guide every Saturday to find Realtors at your new station.



haw 'bout

those Yankees

beatin' the

Dodgers in

the series...

ANYTHING ONER

WELL I DIDN'T MEAN

REALLY?

WHAT AM I

DOING IN

2004?

NICELY

Horoscope

Mars and Uranus are having a parent-teacher conference, and they're clearly not on the same page when it comes to how we humans should be properly **Holiday Mathis**

disciplined. Are we to learn from our mistakes, or is it better if we avoid the mis takes altogether? Both routes will be tempting. One thing is certain: The lesson is learned either way.

TODAY'S BIRTHDAY (December 30). You know your place in the world this year - go to it! This winter, your compassion and generosity will be

rewarded by a sweet, transformative love. Spring is reflective, and by May, you'll emerge from your co coon to accept the applause that is due you. Your year ends on a surprising note - maybe a trip abroad? Love signs are Aries and Cancer.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). An end-of-the-year rebellion is

featured. Do what you must to get it out of your system. You're the one who must deliver an important message. Cut to the quick so every one can move on the info as quickly as possible

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). U2 said it best: Some days slip

through your fingers and onto the floor. Forget about tackling your in-box today, unless you can get to it before the rooster crows. Goofing off is the order of the day

GEMINI (May 21-June 21).

You've got the holiday spirit. Gregarious and outgoing, you schmooze with the best of 'em at whatever gathering you attend - and there are choices! Cozy up to a VIP, and pitch your latest idea

CANCER (June 22-July 22). Be kind to yourself, little crab. You are susceptible to bouts of blueness this time of year, when the sun is in the sign opposite your own. Don't push too hard. Gather your strength. Your

time is coming. LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). Finances are looking up. Delays and restrictions have been the norm for the past few weeks, but those checks

you've been expecting finally come in. A tardy holiday gift could find its

way to your doorstep, too VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). Lately, you've been the victim of a

slowly accumulating sluggishness, and now is your chance to succumb to it. Be mellow and aimless - it works for

vou. You'll have terrific luck wandering the mall and the end-of-the-vear

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). Yester-

day's pleasant vibe continues, making you cheerful, sociable and not very likely to get a whole lot of work done. If you must go into the office today,

make use of your time by cleaning out your desk

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). You glean insight into what lesson it is you most need to learn in this lifetime. Hint: It has something to do with your parents. Psychic vibes are hot, too. Divination techniques like I Ching or tarot can help narrow your focus

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). Your brilliance sparkles like congratulatory champagne. Pat

yourself on the back, and take time before the new year to reflect on all that has changed in your life in the past 12 months. Enjoy the view from the top

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). It doesn't matter right now if you don't know exactly where you're

headed, as long as you keep moving in the right direction. Signs are everywhere, lighting your path like fireflies in the dark. I ook for them

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). Anger is healthy when you channel it constructively. Search the Internet for a new job, e-mail your congressman, hit the gym, or burn a compilation CD for the person you'd like to kiss on New Year's Eve.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). Swimming against the current may Lois

be fine for spawning salmon, but why do it if you don't have to? Incredible possibilities arise when you stop struggling. Accept whatever comes your way, and then, take appropriate

Creators Syndicate

Peanuts

















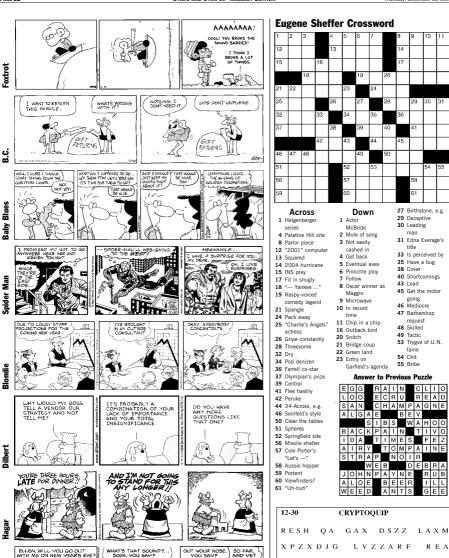












LAXM

ESKKVP XKAP CXODJESPO?

CXSHHMA FOPJA!

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: IF I RAISE SOME ALCOHOL UP OVER MY HEAD, HAVE I SUCCESSFULLY LIFTED MY SPIRITS?

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: C equals Q

Finding love at funeral not rare

Dear Abby: I just finished reading the letter from "J.H. in Yonkers," who fell in love on a Yonkers, trip to a friend's funeral. I agree with you, Abby, it's a great story.

Mine is similar.

I dated Mike for 2½ years and then we broke up. For eight months I couldn't forget him. On a whim, I called his mom during one of the many Midwestern blizzards of 1979

She told me her mother had died and the visitation was the next night. I made it through the snowdrifts to the visitation — the only non-family member because of the weather Mike invited me to the house afterward.

The next day, I met him in the church parking lot, where he told me guiltily he had whistled all the way to his grandmother's funeral because he knew I'd be there! We knew we were meant to be together and we were convinced his grandmother

had a hand in it If we can believe that there are pennies from heaven, we can believe someone was looking out for J.H. and her love. Mike and I will celebrate our 25th anniversary in a few months.

- Ruth in Rock Island, Ill Dear Ruth: Your letter gave me goose bumps. Thank you for sharing your beautiful

Dear Abby story. Read on:

> Dear Abby: My narents met at a fineral 80 years ago.

My mother, who always hated fimerals went because the deceased had been a close friend of her mother's. After the service, Mom was very

impressed by a tall, handsome, older man she met.

The rest is history. — Esther in Kenmore, N.Y.

Dear Esther: Which proves that sometimes an ending can also be a beginning.

Dear Abby: My father died on Dec. 19 the year I turned 20.

My mother was only 48, and 1 had four younger brothers and sisters. Our family was devastated that Christmas All the neigh bors knew about it and were very nice to us

A girl up the street invited my wo sisters and me to her birth day party on Jan. 11. She said if we didn't come, she would come and get us.

The girl who was giving the party had a younger brother, who had asked his best friend, "Jim," to the party. Jim and I started dating that week. We knew by summer that we would marry and were engaged the next year.

On Oct. 22, we celebrated our 27th wedding anniversary.

When people ask how we met, I am not reluctant to tell them. I had never dated anyone before I met Jim — so I say that Jim was

sent from heaven. - Maureen in Toronto Dear Maureen: And I believe it.

Letters for this column - with yo name and phone number — should be addressed to Dear Abby, P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles CA 90069. Readers can write to Abby on the Internet at http://www.uexpress.com/dearabby Universal Press Syndicate

Unscramble these four Jumbles,

one letter to each square.

ECKER

RICLY

HOYNUL

HEABED

to form four ordinary words.

THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME by Henri Arnold and Mike Argirion



OUT THE WRONG COLOR Now arrange the circled letters to

form the surprise answer, as

She spurned the printer's advances because he - WASN'T HER 'TYPE'

suggested by the above cartoon.

Answer: A Jumbles: WALTZ

Answer:

(Answers tomorrow) EVENT PARDON SPORTY

Yesterday's

Put cluttered keepsakes in storage

Dear Annie: I married my husband, a widower, after we had known each other for five years. I thought I knew what I was getting into,

but I was silly We are living in the home my husband has been in for over 30 years and the place he is unlikely ever to leave. Six years ago, his daughter, "Tina, quit school and left

home. Her bedroom was waist-deen in a terrible mess that took me months to clean. Her things now are stored in our house. Also, Tina's mother died 12 years ago, and many of her

items were kept for Tina. In fact, nearly all the storage in the house is filled with things belonging either to Tina or her mother. Tina wrote me a letter, saving

she did not want any of these things and to give them away. She is building a small home, and although I'm not sure it will have any space for this mass of items, I am reluctant to assume



the future. I suspect she will someday

change her mind I want to get the things that belong to my stendaughter and her mother out of the house. It annoys me to have them stored in every nook and cranny We even have his late wife's wedding dress, even though Tina says she never will want it.

I feel like a tenant in this house. Please help.

- The Newer Wife Dear New Wife: You've been

quite patient with Tina, but since you are reluctant to part with these things, perhaps you can put them in a storage facility so your home is no longer a warehouse. When Tina's house is finished, go through these things again with her. If she still wants nothing, by all means, give her mother's keepsakes to someone in the family who would value them and the rest to a worthy

Dear Annie: I read the letter from "Disappointed in the

South," complaining about par-ents who don't come to their children's school functions or pick them up on time. She hit the nail on the head.

My husband is a band director. He always has to stay at least an hour after every event, waiting for parents. His solution is to call the police if the parents are more than 30 minutes late. It certainly has stopped the parents from being lazy.

Tired of It

Dear Tired: We don't think the nolice would be thrilled about this so we'll make a different suggestion. Parents should be informed that if they are more than 30 minutes late picking up their child from a school event, they will be fined and the money will be used to buy school supplies.

To Duy School Supplies.

Annie's Mallbox is written by Kathy Mitchell and Marcy Sugar, longtime editors of the Ann Landers column. Please e-mail your questions to anniesmalibox/scommast.net, or write to: Annie's Malibox, c/o Creators Syndicate. 577? W. Century Blvd., Sulte 700, Los Angelese. Century Blvd., Sulte 700, Creators Syndicate Creators Syndicate

Family Circus



"I wish I had an elf who could get in there and dust."

GRAFFITI TRUE FRIENDSHIP PEOPLE IN







SCOREBOARD

AFN TV & Radio

Thursday

ts, 9 a.m.—College basketball: Albama at Wisconsin.
AFN-Sports, 1 p.m.—College football:
Alama Bowl, Ohio St. vs. Oklahoma St. (did).
AFN-Sports, 6 p.m.—College football: Colege Gameday Bowl Special.
AFN-Sports and Radio, 7 p.m.—College
ootball: Continental Tire Bowl, Boston Colege vs. North Carolina.
AFN-Sports and Radio, 0.30 p.m.—College
ootball: Emerald Bowl, Navy vs. New Mexi-

Friday

AFN-Sports and Radio, 2 a.m.—College ootball: Holiday Bowl, Texas Tech vs. Cali-

football Kolfany Bowl, Texas Tech vs. Call-formia, Land. 2, a.m.—College football: Sil-fonzapa at Missouri.—College football: Sil-APH-Sports, 8 a.m.—College football: Sil-genzapa at Missouri (digit), football: Mis-derican at Missouri (digit), football: Missouri (digit), footba

All Times Central European Time; did indi-cates delayed broadcast. All listings are subject to change. Visit more information.

Pro football



St. Louis Arizona San Francisco x-clinched playoff spot y-clinched division z-clinched conference Sunday's games

Detroit at Tennessee Miami at Baltimore Green Bay at Chicago N.Y. Jets at St. Louis Cleveland at Houston Cleveland at Houston Minnesota at Washington Pittsburgh at Buffalo New Orleans at Carolina San Francisco at New England Cincinnati at Philadelphia Atlanta at Seattle Tampa Bay at Arizona Kansas City at San Diego Indianapolis at Denver Jacksonville at Oakland Dallas at N.Y. Glants

College football

Bowl glance
Tuesday, Dec. 14
New Morelans Bowl
Are Morelans Bowl
Are Morelans Bowl
Are Morelans Bowl
Are Morelans Bowl
At Orlands, Day
At Orlands, Day
At Orlands, Day
At Orlands, Day
Bowling Green 52, Meraphie 35
Forthers, Market Company
Bowling Green 52, Meraphie 35
Forthers, Market Company
Bowling Green 52, Meraphie 35
Forthers, Market Company
Forthers, Market Compan

Monday, Dec. 27 MPC Computers Bo At Boise, Idaho Payout: \$750,000 ate 37, Virginia 34, O Motor City Bowl At Detroit Fresno State

Payout: \$750,000 ut 39, Toledo 10 Tuesday, Dec. 28 Independence Bow Independence Bow At Shreveport, La. Payout: \$1.2 millio 17, Miami (Ohio) 13 Insight Bowl At Phoenix

te 1.7. Mann (Unio) 13
Af Phoenix
Payout: \$750,000
11
Websel Sk, Votre Sum 2
At San Antonio
Payout: \$1.1 million
Payout: \$1.1 million
Payout: \$1.1 million
Payout: \$1.35 million
Payout: \$1.35 million
Payout: \$1.35 million
Payout: \$1.35 million
At San Antonio
Continental Tire Bowl
At Charlotte, M.C.
Continental Tire Bowl
At Charlotte, M.C.
College (\$-3) vs. North Carolini
College (\$-3) vs. North Carolini

Boston College (6:3) vs. North Car Grant College (6:3) vs. North Car AT San Francisco New Messico (100 Mes

Sun Bowl
At El Paso, Texas
Payout; \$1.5 million
Purdue (7-4) vs. Arizona State (8-3)

4) vs. Arizona state (6-3) Liberty Bowl At Memphis, Tenn. Payout: \$1.35 million e (11-0) vs. Louisville (10-1)

se State (17-50-51-50 mission (17-50-51-50 mission

(9-2) vs. Georgia (9-2) Gator Bowl At Jacksonville, Fla. Payout: \$1.6 million te (8-3) vs. West Virg

Florida State (%) 12, well Veryinia (%) 31. Million (%) 40. Well Veryinia (%) 31. Million (%) 40. Well Veryinia (%) 31. Million (%) 40. Millio

College basketball

AP Men's Top 25 fared

Tuesday Illinois (12-0) did not play. Next: vs. 1. Illinois (12-0) did not play, Next vs. No. 9. Nortwesters Stage, Thursday, Nortwesters Stage, Thursday, No. 9. Nortwesters Stage, Children (1994), Nortwesters Stage (1994), Nortwesters Stage (1994), Nortwesters (1994), Nort

son, Sunday. 7 State Play, Next: vs. Clem-7. Syracuse (12-1) beat Albany, N.Y. 72-55. Next: vs. Hofstra, Thursday. 8. Kentucky (8-1) did not play. Next: vs. Campbell, Wednesday. ampbell, Wédnesday. 9. Georgia Tech (9-1) beat Lafayette 92-58. Vext: at No. 2 Kansas, Saturday. 10. Pittsburgh (9-0) did not play. Next: vs. south Carolina, Wednesday. 11. Connecticut (7-1) beat Sacred Heart 73-55. Next: vs. Quinnipiac, Thursday. 12. Gonzaga (10-1) beat No. 3 Oklahoma State 78-75. Next: at Missouri, Thursday. 13. Washington (10-1) did not play. Next:

State 78-75. Next: at Missouri, Inursoay.
13. Washington (10-1) did not play, Next:
vs. Galifornia, Friday.
14. Arizona (9-2) beat Eastern Washington
79-85. Next: vs. Richmond, Thursday.
Vs. State Vs. Richmond, Thursday.
16. iowa (11-1) beat Air Force 73-63. Next:
vs. Caint Juis, Friday.

16. low (11-1) beat Air Force 7-6-3. Next - Saint Louis Findsas (10-1) beat Columbia Saint Louis Findsas (10-1) beat Columbia Saint Court in Saint Louis Findsas (10-1) did not play. Next: at Wisconsis Wednesday (not play. Next: at Wisconsis Wednesday (not play. Next: at Saint Kentucky, Thursday.

20. George Washington (6-1) did not play. Next: vs. Joseph Saint March Court (10-1) did not play. Next: vs. Wrighta Tech, Thursday.

21. Mississipp State (11-2) did not play. Next: vs. Unging Tech, Thursday.

22. Cincinnati (10-0) did not play. Next: vs. Longwood, Thursday. 23. Michigan State (7-2) did not play. Next: vs. North Carolina-Asheville, Wednesday. 24. Maryland (8-2) beat Liberty 112-68. 24. Maryland (8-2) beat Liberty 112-69. 25. Virgina (11) Mary 8 Md. Tuesday. 25. Virgina (11) Mary 8 Md. Tuesday. 55. Willow (11) Mary 8 Md. Tuesday. 55. Willow (11) Mary 8 Md. State (12) No. 5 Wake Forest, Sunday.

Tuesday's men's scores

Bucknell 69, Saint Joseph's 62 Connecticut 73, Sacred Heart 55 Drexel 76, Monmouth, N.J. 47 Georgetown 78, Norfolk St. 70, 0T La Salle 66, American U. 53 Massachusetts 67, Boston U. 65 Millersville 83, Holy Family 56 St. Francis, NY 70, Cornell 63 Syracuse 72, Albany, NY. 55 Vermont 77, Sena 22

Valparatos 69, Penh St. 56.
Ashland American
Ashland 82, Trinity Christian 55
Shippensburg 82, Lincoin Memorial 66
First Round
Cent. Connecticut 87, 80, Santa Clara 68
Charlotte 80, Santa Lobo Invitational
First Round
Cent. Santa Lobo Invitational
First Round
Troy 72, Pepperdule 69
Troy 72, Pepperdule 69

Dreyfus Holiday Festival First Round N.C. State 84, Columbia St. John's 71, Canisius 5: FIU Holiday Tor

FIU Holiday Tournament Championship Fla. International 74, Ohio 73, OT Third Place Binghamton 65, Colgate 61 Fiesta Bowl Classic First Round Arizona 79 F. Machine

Arizona 79, E. Washington 45 Richmond 69, Butler 68 Flint Hills Islander Invitationa First Round

First Round
Illinois 71, St. Bonaventure 62
exas A&M-Corpus Christi 85, Alcorn St. 41
Shamrock Office Solutions Classic
First Round
urray St. 66, UC Davis 43

Murray St. 66, UC Davis 43
St. Mary's, Cal. 72, Radford 60
State Farm Sun Bowl Tourna
Championsur
UTEP 68, Princeton 42
Third Place
Tulane 71, Alabama St. 59
Tournament of Heroes
First Round
N. L. City 85, Clark 11

J. City 86, Clark U. 80 aten Island 95, McDaniel 74 UCF Holiday Invitational First Round

Brown 83, UCF 82, OT Charleston Southern 50, Fordham 49

AP Women's Top 25 fared

Tuesday

1. LSU (11-0) did not play. Next: vs. Texas State, Thursday. State, Thursday.

2. Duke (11-1) did not play. Next: vs. Rhode Island at Auburn, Ala., Wednesday.

3. Baylor (9-1) did not play. Next: vs. Montana State. Wednesday. stand of Aubert, Ala., Worlnesday,

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7 North Carolina (10-1) beat Lipscomb

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8. Termissay, Next: at North Ya.

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11. Toza Tech (8.7) beat Sacramento,

12. Toza Tech (8.7) beat Sacramento,

13. Toza Tech (8.7) beat Sacramento,

14. Bostina College (9.1) did not play, Next: at North
15. Vajndovili (9.1) did not play, Next: at North
16. Georgia (9.2) did not play, Next: at North
17. Maryland (8.1) did not play, Next: at North
18. Technology, Next: at North
19. Technology, Next: at West and Next: at North
19. Technology, Next: at West at West Sacramento,

19. Technology, Next: at West Sacramento

22. Kansas State (1-2) Deat Vindings 2 5 5. Next: at Saint Joseph's, Thursday. 23. UCLA (7-3) Deat Southern Cal 62-61. Next: vs. Oregon State, Sunday. 24. Rutgers (6-2) did not play. Next: vs. No. 24. Rutgers (6-2) did not play. Next: vs. No. 8 Tennessee, Wednesday, 25. New Mexico (8-1) did not play. Next: vs. San Francisco, Friday.

Tuesday's women's scores EAST Bentley 86, Southampton 76

Duquesne 67, Cornell 40 Kansas St. 75, Villanova 63 La Salle 79, Georgetown 67 Lehman 50, Kings Point 41 Lehman 50, Kings Point 41 Manhattan 44, Wagner 39 N.J. City 75, 5t. Joseph's, L.I. 47 New Hampshire 62, Providence 5 Niagara 99, Colgate 76 Pittsburgh 88, St. Francis, NY 62 Robert Morris 55, Army 44 Syracuse 63, Sacred Heart 59 Towson 60, UMBC 43

Tówson 60, UMBC 43
SOUTH
Austin Peay 76, Evansville 70
Georgia Southern 82, ETSU 76, OT
Liberty 70, William & Mary 47
Memphis 62, Radford 37
North Carolina 91, Lipscomb 45
SE Louislana 74, Texas Southern 62
Va. Commonwealth 73, Howard 63 Aguinas 74, Huntington 54 Ashland 81, Rio Grande 68

Asmard 81, NO Grande 88 Augustana,S.D. 100, Chadron St. 55 Ball St. 75, Saint Louis 60 Bemidji St. 73, Upper Iowa 58 Benedictine, Kan. 83, Milwaukee En ing 63

MILLER/HUDS ~~

ng 63 Concordia, Neb. 73, Viterbo 70 Concordia, St.P. 83, South Dakota 71 Detroit 67, Youngstown St. 43

Illinois 82, Cent. Michigan 44 lowa 59, Wis.-Milyvaukee 51 Kansas 71, Sap Diego S. Kansas 12, Sap Diego S. Kansas 12, Sap Diego S. Gas Candas 14, Sap Diego S. Candas 14, Sap

Xavier 75, Kentucky 67
SOUTHWEST
Texas 83, Sam Houston St. 33
Texas Tech 83, Sacramento St. 37 Trinity, Texas 68, McMurry 53

Trinlty, Texas 6k, McMerry 53
Bolse St. 58, Woyning 44
CS Northridge 80, Cal St.-Fullerton 74, 2DT
Marts 18, San Francisco 58
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Santa Calara 78, Newada 71
CS Northridge 80, Cal St.-Fullerton 74, 2DT
Marts 18, San Francisco 58
Santa Calara 78, Newada 71
CS Santa Barbara 85, Long Beach St. 80, OT
UCL 40, 59, Southers 61
Cayoller Classic
Trinlt Round
Innex Middle 11, 15

James Madison 63, American U. 61 Virginia 59, Albany, N.Y. 34 FIU Sun and Fun Classic First Round Dayton 63, Brown 51 Fla. International 78, Stony Brook 44

Miami Holiday Classic First Round arymount 76, Hofstra 72

Mami Holiday Gassic
Loyola Marymour Tr, Holistra TY,
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Holista TP
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Weschester Marriott Holiday C First Round Assumption 71, St. Leo 58 Gannon 61, Pace 57 EXHIBITION Portland St. 75, Utah Valley St. 66

Hockey

World Junior Championship

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2 1 0 1 5 7 2 3 0 0 3 1 19 0 Saturday, Dec. 25 At Grand Forks, N.D.

At Grand Forks, N.D.
Canada 7, Slovakia 3
United States 5, Russia 4
United States 5, Russia 4
Cacch At Their River Falls, Minn.
Finland 4, Gress Sunday, Dec. 26
At Grand Forks, N.D.
Switzerland 5, Belarus 0
Switzerland 5, Belarus 0
Sweden 1, Monday, Dec. 27
At Grand Forks, N.D.
Canada 8, Sweden 1

At Grand Forks, N.D.
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Czech Republic vs. Switzerland Belarus vs. United States At Thief River Falls, Minn Finland vs. Sweden Slovakia vs. Germany

Deals

Tuesday's transactions

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REW YORK Mational League

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RASKETBAL

RASKETBAL

BASKETBAL

BAS Horn on the injured list.

NEW JERSEY NETS—Placed G Ron Mercer
on the injured list. Signed F Jerome Moiso.

PORTLAND TRAIL BLAZERS—Waived C

Modeling Stoppenis

PUNITAND TRAIL BLAZERS—Walved C Valdmin's Stepania. FOOTBALL SOME COMMONS—Placed Re Richie Anderson General Placed Re Richie Anderson Signed FB Lossaka Polite. DT Tron LaFavor and WR Tom Crowder from the practice squad.

tice squad.

DENVER BRONCOS—Placed RB Garrison
Hearst on injured reserve. Signed RB
Johnathan Reese from the practice squad.
WASHINGTON REDSKINS—Released OL COLLEGE

ROLLINS—Announced the resignation of Dean Hybl. assistant director of athletics for

communications.

UC IRVINE—Announced the resignation of Mark Adams, women's basketball coach. Named Molly Tuter interim women's basket-

TANK MCNAMARA







Postseason game is a big feat for Buffs

BY JOHN MARSHALL The Associated Press

BOULDER, Colo. — For a team that sets its sights on Big 12 and national championships, finishing just above .500 and earning a trip to midlevel bowl shouldn't be something to get excited about.

But consider what the Buffaloes have been through this year - sex and recruiting scandals, coach Gary Barnett's suspension, a wild ride through the schedule -- and it's easy to understand their satisfaction from a 7-5 season and a spot in the Houston Bowl against Texas-El Paso on Wednesday.

"It has been a rough year for this team and for this program," offensive lineman Sam Wilder said. "Things did not always go the way we wanted them to this year, but this team has kept

highting."

The long offseason threatened to overshadow anything the team might accomplish on the

A grand jury investigated claims by nine women who said they were sexually assaulted by players or recruits since 1997. No charges were filed, but three of those women sued the

university and two of the suits are still pending. A separate investigation concluded sex, alcohol and drugs were used as football recruiting tools by player-hosts, though there was no evidence university officials knowingly sanctioned the activity.

Barnett was suspended for three months after making insensitive remarks about two of the women, including former kicker Katie Hnida shortly after she said she was raped by a teammate in 2000.

The school overhauled its recruiting procedures, but the headlines didn't stop once the season started.

Embattled athletic director Dick Tharp resigned in November and chancellor Richard Bypny followed suit earlier this month, though both said it had nothing to do with the scandal. A fraud investigator hired by state prosecutors is also looking into the school's fund-raising practices, including two football camps run by Barnett.

Somehow, the players were able to fight off the distractions and win games. "Everybody has gone through a lot, and the

"Everybody has gone through a lot, and the smoke has cleared and we're still standing," Barnett said. "The university, athletic department and administration have had a very successful year — and the football team."



Colorado coach Gary Barnett has been suspended and his team has endured sex and recruiting scandals this year. But the Buffaloes (7-5), who play UTEP in the Houston Bowl on Wednesday, will finish 2004 with a winning record.

It's hard to aroue

Colorado started off the season superbly, winning three straight games for the first time since 1998. That was followed by four losses in five games, seemingly ending Colorado's chances of earning a bowl bid.

es of earning a bowl bid.

But the Buffaloes won three straight games to end the regular season, beating rival Nebraska 26-20 on the road to earn a spot in the Big 12

championship game. Winning the Big 12 North might have said more about the weakness of the division than Colorado's skill — the Buffaloes were crushed 42.3 by Oklahoma in the title game — but it was quite an accomplishment for a team not given much of a chance to succeed.

"I've never had a young team that has achieved as much as this team has," Barnett said. "If these kids can take this kind of approach when they're older, then they've really got a lot ahead of them."

As for Barnett, his year had nearly as many ups and downs as his team.

Barnett survived his suspension with his job intact after a university investigation, but the pressure didn't let up.

After being praised for holding his team together early in the season, Barnett heard the calls for his job during the midseason slide. It didn't help when Tharp, one of Barnett's biggest supporters, stepped down.

But just when things seemed the worst, Barnett turned his team around and got them into the Big 12 title game and a bowl, earning conference coach of the year honors.

"I really haven't thought about me very much," Barnett said. "In the throes of the battle, you don't start feeling sorry for yourself. You worry about the people you're responsible for and getting them out of the mess they're in."

Gators, Canes renew rivalry in Peach Bowl

By MARK LONG The Associated Press

ATLANTA — Dwayne Dixon knows as much as anyone about the

Florida-Miami series.

He played for the Gators from 1980-83, splitting four games against the Hurricanes. He was a student assistant for two years following his college career, then returned to become the receivers coach in 1990 and has

been there since then.

Now that the once-bitter rivalry has been renewed — the Hurricanes will play the Gators for the fourth time in five seasons Friday night in the Peach Bowl — Dixon believes the in-state rivals should try to meet more often.

It could happen.
"It really was one of the great rivalries in college football," he said. "And
it has a chance to return to that if we
get Miami on the schedule. I know
that's tough to do, but it would be good
for everyone — the fans, the players,
the coaches."

The coacnes."
Florida athletic director Jeremy
Foley and Miami athletic director
Foley and Miami athletic director
Faul Dee are awaiting the outcome of
proposed legislation that would allow
a 12-game schedule each season. If it
passes — arguments are expected to
be heard in April — the Gators and
Hurricanes will play a
home-and-home series every few

They won't play annually because both programs would like to use the extra game to play other elite teams. But they would resume a heated series that lost some of its luster during the 13-year break.

The Peach Bowl could help, too.
"It means the world to us right

"It means the world to us right now," Miami guard Chris Myers said. "This is our national championship game."

The Florida-Minmi series began in 1938 and grew into a rivaly in the early 1950s, when the teams began playing for a wooder canoe. The 9-foot canoe made from a 20-year-old cypress log would be ceremoniously brought out at halftime, displayed on the sideline and then presented to the winning coach.

Because Mani wan the final game.

of a series that was played every year from 1944-1987, the canoe sits in the

Sponsored by

school's sports hall of fame. It has been somewhat forgotten.

But memories of the series might never be erased.

There was the infamous "Florida Flop" in 1971 — when Florida defenders laid down and let the Hurricanes score, allowing the Gators to get the ball back and quarterback John Reaves to break Jim Plunkett's record for NCAA career passing yards.

Miami coach Fran Curci refused to shake hands with Florida coach Doug Dickey after the game. Making matters worse, several Gators headed to the East end zone of the Orange Bowl and jumped into a pool that housed Miami Dolphins mascot Flipper during NFI, games

It fired up the Hurricanes for years.
The rivalry grew even more intense in 1980, when Florida fans — angry that the Gators trailed Miami 28-7 late in Gainesville — threw peaches at the Hurricanes, who were headed to the Peach Bowl.

Miami coach Howard Schnellenberger was so furious he ordered a field goal to add to the final margin.

For the Gators, the game never hit the heights of other Southeastern Conference rivalries such as Auburn, Georgia and Temessee — or reached the crescendo of the annual meeting with Florida State.

So Florida dropped the Hurricanes in 1988 because it wanted to play a "more national schedule," then promptly replaced them with Montana State. Miami fans accused the Gators of pulling out because the Hurricanes were dominating them — on field and on the national scene.

With Florida's recruiting efforts suffering in talent-rich Dade County, former coach Steve Spurrier wanted the Hurricanes back on the schedule in 1990. But with the SEC expanding, there was no room.

After 13 years, Florida and Miami renewed the rivalry in the 2001 Sugar Bowl. Just a few nights before Miami's 37-20 win, a handful of players from both teams — most notably Miami's Bryant McKinnie and Florida's Alex Brown — mixed it up on Bourbon Street.

The series took another turn last season, when Brock Berlin rallied the Hurricanes from a 23-point, third-quarter deficit to a 38-33 victory.







Top Scores for Week 16 Best Overall Scores Jack58 422 ABS RAF Croughton 252 768-SAF-T Camp Henry 2812 Joe Corleon 250 davidaleshire hhc 2/37 ar 2810 giants#1 derekc40 1st Infantry Division Who Cares MNF-I DCSPER 248 BigRedOneAMLO 2796 STEELFROGWOOD MAG-12 Leighton Barracks 248 chrisboz69 HHC 121 Signal 2782 Bone-Daddy HQ, USAREUR, G2 PilgrimPride 246 2774 Jaguar One DoDDS unit 20239 SPIELMEISTER 04 Hohenfels konthebu 2774 242 **BIG DRE** DYNCORP 2772 cowboy48 Rhein Main AB Razorback 86 mxg/qa **PilgrimPride** Yokosuka 2766

See websites for official game rules.

Check this space every Thursday during the entire NFL season for the weeks Top Scores and Best Overall Scores during the NFL Challenge.

Texas out to make statement in Rose Bowl

BY RALPH D. RUSSO The Associated Press

owl games often define a team's A victory over a quality oppo-nent to end the season can validate a successful year. Finishing off with a loss in a high-profile matchup can tarnish all that was accomplished to get there.

Several teams playing on the first few days of 2005 have much to prove, but none more than Texas.

lew Year's

The Longhorns meet Big Ten co-champion Michigan on Jan. 1 in the Rose Bowl. Rarely has a 10-win team received so much grief for earning a major bowl bid.

When the Longhorns slipped into the Bowl Championship Series ahead of California, they became this year's BCS villain. It wasn't necessarily fair, but Texas coach Mack Brown brought much of the criticism on himself by pleading for his team so

So the Longhorns either can quiet the critics and justify their first BCS bid with a victory, or lose and be dismissed as unworthy of the lofty status

Brown doesn't believe his lobbying has

put any extra burden on the Longhorns "Not at all, our team's the fourth-best team in the country based on a combination of things, and I told them I didn't do anything, they deserved it, and they got in because they deserved it," Brown said. "All I did was ask people to look. Really and truly, I feel like we should have been in three of the last four years, and I wish I would have made people more aware then,

Texas isn't alone in playing for its reputa-

Wisconsin followed victories in its first nine games with two ugly, lopsided losses The Badgers play Georgia in the Outback Bowl on Jan. 1, trying to avoid a three-game losing streak that will make a once-promising season seem like a huge



RB Cedric Benson, left, has rushed for 1,764 yards and 19 touchdowns this season for Texas, which is a much-maligned 10-1 team heading into the Rose Rowl on Ian. 1.

disappointment

Pittsburgh and West Virginia will be looking to repair the tattered image of the Big East

The Panthers play Utah in the Fiesta Bowl. The unbeaten Utes are the first team from a non-BCS conference to reach one of the four big-money bowl games, but it's Pitt that comes in as more than a two-touch-

down underdog. "All I can say is, the Big East is a very competitive conference," said outgoing Pitt coach Walt Harris, who is headed to

West Virginia plays Florida State in the Gator Bowl, also trying to snap a two-game losing streak. The Mountaineers entered the season ranked in the top 10 and heavily favored to win the watered-down Big East Instead, they lost to Boston College and Pitt and had to share the league crown. The Seminoles (8-3), meanwhile, are

coming off a loss and trying to avoid their third season in four years with at least four

And of course, Auburn will try to complete a perfect season in the Sugar Bowl against Virginia Tech, and give voters in the AP poll an alternative No. 1 to the winner of the Orange Bowl between Southern California and Oklahoma. 'We feel like national champs no matter

what the polls say," Auburn All-American cornerback Carlos Rogers said. "They can't take that away. We don't

have to have the recognition from the nolls." The picks:

Saturday, Jan. 1 Cotton Bowl

Tennessee (plus 3) vs. Texas A&M: Vols have lost past two bowl games by com-bined 57-17 ... TENNESSEE 33-28.

Outback Bowl Wisconsin (plus 7) vs. Georgia: Bulldogs go for third straight double-digit win season ... **GEORGIA 20-14.**

Gator Bowl Florida State (minus 8) vs. West Virginia: Rematch of 1982 Gator Bowl, won 31-12 by Noles ... FLORIDA STATE 24-10.

Capital One Bowl Iowa (plus 61/2) vs. LSU: Nick Saban's last game as LSU coach ... LSU 20-17.

Rose Bowl Michigan (plus 6) vs. Texas: Wolverines' last Rose Bowl victory was 1998 ... MICHI-GAN 23-17.

Fiesta Bowl Utah (minus 161/2) vs. Pittsburgh: Both coaches have new jobs waiting for them ... **IITAH 48-28**

Monday Jan 3

Sugar Bowl Auburn (plus 61/2) vs. Virginia Tech: Tigers do all they can against tough Hokies ... AUBURN 28-13.

Tuesday, Jan. 4 Orange Bowl

Southern California (minus 3) vs. Oklahoma: But Trojans look even better against Sooners ... USC 34-21.

Edwards stakes his claim as Michigan's best receiver

BY LARRY LAGE The Associated Press

ANN ARBOR, Mich. - When Braylon Edwards won the Biletnikoff Award as the nation's best receiver, the senior was asked if he thought he was Michigan's best receiver ever

Edwards said he was

It's hard to argue with him, though it's difficult to compare him with Anthony Carter because he played more than 20 vears ago when Bo Schembechler rarely chose to pass.

Edwards, the first Wolverine to win the Biletnikoff Award, set season school records with 87 receptions for 1,221 yards receiving

With 12 receiving touchdowns for Michigan, his career total of 36 trails Carter's Big Ten record by one. Edwards already has broken Carter's school marks with 242 catches and 3,432 yards re-

He also owns Michigan records with three receptions in 37 straight games, an active streak heading into the Rose Rowl against Texas, and 16 100-vard receiving games. And, he's the first Ten player with three 1,000-yard receiving seasons.

"I think my legacy is pretty much complete," Edwards said. "I think I've done everything I wanted to do, and we've accomplished everything as a team. The one thing now is to win the Rose Bowl. That would be the finishing touch "

Edwards is blessed with a 6-foot-3, 206-pound body, sprinter's speed and the ability to outjump defensive backs for the foot-- or rip it away from them with brute strength.

"He just goes over defenders and grabs touchdowns," Texas safety Phillip Geiggar said. "It looks like a lot of people had him in single coverage. I don't think you can do that."

Michigan State found that out this season.

Edwards caught two TD passes

late in the fourth quarter to help Michigan erase a 17-point deficit in just 5:44, and grabbed a third TD in triple overtime to beat the Spartans.

The Longhorns held Oklahoma's Mark Clayton, the best receiver they faced, to just three receptions for 19 yards this season. Edwards butted heads with

Michigan coach Lloyd Carr in the past because of his loquacious ways, occasional tardiness and a cell phone that rang during a team meeting when he was a freshman, a mistake that still bothers Edwards.

But Carr and Edwards got along just fine this season, and the coach didn't hesitate to praise his star receiver.

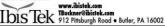
"Braylon certainly has had a great career," Carr said. "I'm extremely proud of what he's done this season and the leadership that he's given our team and the example that he's set on the field. He's certainly one of the great football players we've had at Michigan. I don't think there's any doubt about that





The libs Tar Kam Eulinger attached to the Protot of the vehicle enables the HamMVV to easily pash objects in its path without any damage being done to the front end. Without the Ram Bumper existing vehicle parts are easily damaged sometimes destroying the critical cooling components of the vehicle. With the Ram Bumper attached to the vehi-cle. the HMMVV can easily "push" it's way through barriers or other vehicles mali-ciously put in front of the HMMVV.

The Ram Bumper attaches in a matter of m Bumper attaches in a matter of minutes without any special tools and tion you require for your mission. Cutout in the front provides move



Bowls scoreboard

Iowa St. 17, Miami (Ohio) 13

owa st. 7 s 0 - 1: First Quarter IS—Hicks 4 run (Culbertson kick), 4:04. IS—FG Culberscond Quarter MU—Clemens 28 pass from Betts (Parsegian kick), 25.

hian kick), :25. Third Quarter
MU—Smith 2 run (kick failed), 8:12.
Fourth Quarter
IS—Kock 1 run (Culbertson kick), 13:02.
A—43,000.

MU IS 18 22 25-60 59-295 240 114 20-44-1 10-28-0 72 75 8-45-4 7-37-9 1-0 0-0 7-48 7-71 29:27 30:33 ATISTICS Passing Comp-Att-Int Return Yards

| Rettlin | Tous | Purits-Aug. | 8.45.4 | 7-37.9 | Purits-Is-Vision | 9.45.4 | 7-37.9 | Purits-Yards | 1.60 | 1.60 | Purits-Yards | 1.60 | 1.60 | Purits-Yards | 1.60 | Purits-Y

Oregon St. 38, Notre Dame 21

0 7 7 7-21 14 7 3 14-38 OSU-Gillett 12 pass Anderson (Serna kick), 9:24. OSU-Newton 11 kick), 9:24.

OSU-Newton 11 pass from Anderson
(Serna kick), 5:41.

Second Quarter

OSU-Haines 11 pass from Anderson

Second Quarter
OSU—Haines 11 pass from Anderson
(Serna kick), 7:49.
ND—Fasano 13 pass from Quinn (Fitz-patrick kick), :56.

summerstein i 3 pass from Quinn (Fitz-britok ikiok.). Third Quarter
SSU—FS Serra 38, 91.0a.trick ick.), 2:40.
ND—Walker Fourth Quarter
CSU—Newton 1 pass from Anderson
SSU—Nektholm 1 pass from Anderson
SSU—Nektholm 1 pass from Quinn (Fitz-patrick ick.), 4:22—25.25—25.2

17 19 33-59 18-20 217 358 18-33-1 28-45-0 7 110 8-31.9 4-35.2 Aushes-yaru-Passing Comp-Att-Int Return Yards Punts-Avg. -hles-Lost

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Anghr 4-90, Wilson 2-3, Walker 1-13, sano 1-13, Palmer 1-6, Harris 1-3, Pow-5-Neal 1-2, Schmidt 1-1, Shelton 1-(minus Oregon St., Newton 7-85, Hass 5-105, lett 4-62, Love 4-37, Haines 3-25, Bernard 19, Wright 2-16, Hawkins 1-9.

Anderson lifts Oregon St. over Notre Dame

QB throws 4 TDs in Insight victory; Irish lose seventh straight bowl

BY BOB BAUM The Associated Press

PHOENIX - Derek Anderson enhanced his future with a big final game for Oregon State against a Notre Dame team whose epilogue to the Tv Willingham era was just another loss.

Anderson threw for 358 yards and tied an Insight Bowl record with four touchdown passes Tuesday night in the Beavers' 38-21 victory over the Irish.

The senior quarterback completed 28 of 45 passes with no interceptions in a game that should help his prospects in the NFL Draft. Anderson said he would take the next term off to stay in

Arizona and hone his skills He plans to play in the Senior

'Then we'll see where football takes me from there," he said. "Hopefully, I can continue my ca-

The Beavers (7-5) won six of their last seven, largely because Anderson overcame his reputation for throwing interceptions about as often as he threw for touchdowns

"If you look at us over the last six or seven weeks, it was just a great, great job of quarterbacking," Oregon State coach Mike Riley said. "I think Derek probably made a lot of money in the last few weeks."

Anderson moved ahead of Steve Stenstrom to No. 2 on the Pac-10 career list with 11,249 yards passing. Only Carson Palmer (11,818) had more

The Irish (6-6) spoke repeatedly about winning the game for Willingham, fired at the end of the regular season. But Sammie



Oregon State quarterback Derek Anderson was 28-for-45 for 358 vards and four touchdowns in the Beavers' 38-21 victory over Notre Dame in the Insight Bowl on Tuesday night in Phoenix.

Stroughter's 52-yard nunt return and Derrick Doggett's blocked punt helped Oregon State to an early 21-0 lead.

"The short field position the first half just killed us," Notre Dame interim coach Kent Baer said. "The blocked punt and the punt return, you take that away. and it's a much closer game but that's all part of it.'

Brady Quinn threw two touchdown passes as Notre Dame twice cut the lead to 10 points, the last on an 18-yard throw to Rhema McKnight that made it 31-21 with 4:52 left

The Irish's onside-kick attempt backfired and left Oregon State at the Notre Dame 28. Dwight Wright's 3-yard TD run with 3:19 left sealed the victory.

The Irish lost their seventh consecutive bowl game. Notre Dame's last postseason victory was in the Cotton Bowl at the end of the 1993 season

Oregon State improved to 2-0 against Notre Dame. Five seasons ago, the Beavers pounded the Irish 41-9 just down the road at

The Irish pass defense crumbled in three consecutive sea-

the Fiesta Bowl.

son-ending losses, allowing 14 TD es against Pittsburgh, Southern California and Oregon State.

The Beavers had TD drives of only 26, 4 and 45 yards take their early lead, then went 90 yards in 12 plays midway through the second half after Notre Dame had cut the lead to 24-14. Anderson's 1-vard TD toss to Newton capped the long drive, and it was 31-14 with 12:17 to play.

"That was a big drive," Ander-son said. "We were talking on the sidelines and said, 'Let's go answer it.

With Willingham ousted, and hired as head coach at Washing-ton, the Irish played under Baer, Notre Dame's defensive coordina

New Notre Dame coach Charlie Weis, offensive coordinator for the New England Patriots, takes over the Irish program when his NFL season ends.

"I'd be lying if I told you it didn't affect some people," Quinn said. "You try your best, at least as much as you can, and try not to look too far ahead or too far back. 'I think this team dealt with

this situation that we were given as good as any team could."

Baer, who might join Willing ham at Washington, said it had

been an emotional month for the coaches and the players. 'I think there is a definite bond that has been created over this," he said. "That's a great group of young men in there. I'm very proud of how they played, and I

can't say enough about them. The capacity crowd of 45,917 was the largest since the Insight Bowl moved to Bank One Ballpark six years ago. The roof was open at kickoff, but was closed in the first quarter as a light rain

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Iowa State surge continues with win over Miami (Ohio) in Independence

BY CHUCK SCHOFFNER The Associated Press

SHREVEPORT, La. - Stevie Hicks burst through holes he had never seen before. Bret Meyer darted and weaved and comple ed just enough passes to keep the defense honest.

Sometime between the end of the regular season and Tuesday night's Independence Bowl, Iowa State rediscovered its running

The Cyclones pounded the ball at Miami of Ohio all night in a 17-13 victory that capped an impressive turnaround - from 2-10 in 2003 to 7-5, a share of the Big 12 North title and a bowl championship this year.

"Our goal at the beginning of the season was to be one of the most improved teams in the country," Iowa State coach Dan Mc-

Carney said. You have to credit that to our

kids for not being denied." They certainly weren't on this night, when Miami came up short in its bid to send coach Terry Hoeppner out with a victory.

Hoeppner is leaving to become the coach at Indiana, a job he accepted Dec. 17.

"That was as good a football as we have played all year, especially their defense," said Hoeppner, whose team lost to Michigan in the second week of the season. "I'm glad I won't see them next

Those teams that do play Iowa State can expect to see plenty of Hicks and Meyer.

Hicks, a sophomore, ran 27 times for 159 yards and scored the game's first touchdown on a 4-yard run. Meyer, a freshman, carried a season-high 23 times for 122 yards, set up the go-ahead touchdown with a weaving 23-vard run in the fourth quarter and passed for 114 yards, completing 10 of 28. He was chosen as the game's offensive MVP.

When it was over, the Cyclones had rushed for 295 yards, a school record for a bowl game. They had averaged just 128 yards a game during the season.

"For this game, we put in a cou-

ple of new plays that we saw on film would work," Hicks said.
"The offensive line was coming off the ball real well. These are some of the biggest holes I've seen all season. It was just a great job by them.

Hicks ran his season total to 1.062 yards, the eighth time in Mc-Carnev's 10 seasons a back has topped 1,000

'If you look back at the tradition of all the great running backs that have come out of Iowa State just to get back to the old ways of what Iowa State rushing used to do, it's great," center Luke Vander Sanden said.

With ESPN's cameras recording the moment, Miami athletic director Brad Bates told the team just before the game that offensive coordinator Shane Montgomery would succeed Hoeppner as

If the timing of that announcement was meant to inspire the RedHawks (8-5), it didn't do so right away. Miami fell behind 10-0 before rallying to a 13-10 lead in the third quarter.

Giant-killing Gonzaga strikes, toppling No. 3 Oklahoma State

The Associated Press

OKLAHOMA CITY Gonzaga Bulldogs are back in the business of pulling off upsets

Even with their leading scorer hampered by an ankle injury, the No. 12 Bulldogs beat third-ranked Oklahoma State 78-75 on Tuesday night.

Adam Morrison scored 19 points and J.P. Batista came off the bench for a career-high 18 points as the Bulldogs built a big lead and held off the charging Cowboys down the stretch.

It's the second time this season and third in 13 months — that Gonzaga upset a team ranked in the Top 3. The team that came out of nowhere to make back-to-back Sweet 16 runs is now showing its might in the regular season.

And this time, the Bulldogs did it with a backup center pushing their offense Batista who had

in a game, shot 8-for-9 from the floor to anchor a commanding inside attack. Gonzaga shot 57 per-

cent for the game. The Bulldogs are 2-1 against Top 5 teams this season. Gonzaga beat then-No. 3 Georgia Tech 85-73 on Dec. 18 and lost to No. 1 Illinois 89-72 on Nov. 27. The Bulldogs beat No. 3 Missouri 87-80 in overtime Dec. 13, 2003.

Batista, a junior college transfer, was pushed into a bigger role when leading scorer Ronny Turiaf was slowed by an ankle injury and got into foul trouble.

"I knew that Ronny was kind of doubtful for tonight and I had to prepare myself mentally to step up at the right times," Batista

Gonzaga coach Mark Few said Turiaf's ankle was at about half-strength and he was only using the senior to fill up minutes off the bench Turiaf who aver-

aged 20 points in Gonzaga's first 10 games, had 10 points in 18 minutes while others adjusted for his absence. "I think our guys buy into their

roles," Few said. "They under-stand their roles and they bring what they can bring. Erroll Knight and Sean Mallon

each added 11 points for the Bull-dogs, who led by 16 early in the second half, but needed a strong finish to hold off the charging

Oklahoma State (9-1) pushed its way back into it with a 21-8 run that John Lucas III capped with a three-pointer from the left corner to make it 65-62 with 91/2 minutes to play. After a 9-2 run by Gonzaga, the Cowboys drew to within a point twice but couldn't take the lead.

"They're just so tough," Few said. "That, more than anything is what I'm most proud of - we matched their toughness to-



onzaga's J.P. Batista blocks a shot by Oklahoma State's Joe Graham during No. 12 Gonzaga's 78-75 victory on Tuesday in Oklahoma City.

No. 16 Iowa goes to inside game in victory over Air Force

The Associated Press

IOWA CITY, Iowa - Facing a team known for its outside shooting, No. 16 Iowa decided to take the ball inside.

The Hawkeyes scored 48 points in the paint and took only six three-pointers Tuesday night in a 73-63 victory over Air Force.

Pierre Pierce led Iowa with 19 points and Greg Brunner scored 17. Pierce missed his only three-point shot and Brunner didn't attempt any shots from beyond the arc The Falcons attempted 36

three-nointers and made 14. "We thought if we could get

them to shoot from 20 feet and we were shooting from two feet, we would have a very good chance of winning," Iowa coach Steve Al-ford said.

"In a game like this when vou're playing the style we've played. I thought it was much more important that we attack the paint and attack the basket,

After leading 29-17 at halftime the Hawkeyes (11-1) opened the second half with a 17-6 run. Pierce scored seven points during that stretch and gave Iowa a 46-23 lead with a dunk after a steal by Adam Haluska.

Over the next eight minutes the Hawkeyes padded their lead to 61-37 and appeared to be on their way to a comfortable victory with

The Falcons (6-5) responded with a 15-1 run. Tim Keller and Jacob Burtschi each hit a three-pointer, and Nick Welch and Antoine Hood contributed four points each.

A basket by Hood with 2:19 left cut Iowa's lead to 62-52. The Hawkeves held on from there, going 9-for-10 from the foul line in the final two minutes.

"We hadn't been shooting free throws very well lately, but we stretch," said Iowa's Jeff Horner, who finished with only seven points, but was 4-for-4 from the foul line at the end of the game Burtschi led Air Force with 19

points, including five three-pointers. Hood added 12. while Keller and Dan Nwaelele had 11 each.

In the first half, both teams were slow to recover from the long holiday layoff. Iowa hadn't played in a week, while Air Force was back on the court for the first

Tar Heels win 10th straight

CHAPEL HILL, N.C. — Jawad

Williams scored a season-high 25 points and Sean May added 16 as No. 4 North Carolina had no problems after a weeklong layoff, beat-ing N.C.-Wilmington 96-75 on sday night

North Carolina made its first seven shots - including four three-pointers — and led 19-3 after barely 51/2 minutes. Raymond Felton finished with 12 points and 10 assists as the Tar Heels (10-1) won their 10th straight Ed Spencer had 19 points for

N.C.-Wilmington (5-4), which played without leading scorer John Goldsberry. He injured his right shoulder in the previous

No. 7 Syracuse 72, Albany 55: At Syracuse, N.Y., Hakim Warrick had 22 points and 14 rebounds, and Demetris Nichols re turned to the lineup with 10 points to lead the Orange (12-1) after missing three games with a sore back

Nichols had seven points in a 56-second span to give the Orange a 20-point lead over Albany

AP Men's Top 25

No. 9 Georgia Tech 92, Lafayette 58: At Atlanta, freshman An-thony Morrow scored a career-high 20 points, including 11 in a late 27-3 surge by Georgia Tech (9-1).

Georgia Tech was leading Lafavette (3-7) 55-47 when Is-Muhammad dunked begin the big spurt with 10:55 left.

No. 11 Connecticut 73, Sacred Heart 55: At Hartford, Conn., Josh Boone scored 16 second-half points and finished with 20 points and 10 rebounds to help Connecticut (7-1) rally after trail. ing by three at halftime.

Huskies put together spurts of 12-1 and 14-0 after the

break to blow the game open. Luke Granato led the Pioneers (1-8) with 19 points, but had only five in the second half.

ton 45: At Tucson, Ariz., Chan-ning Frye had 16 points as Arizona advanced to the championship game of the Fiesta Bowl Classic. The Wildcats (9-2) will play

No. 14 Arizona 79, E. Washing-

Richmond, a winner over Butler, for the title Thursday night. Arizona is 38-1 in its holiday tourna-

Paul Butorac led Eastern Washington (2-9) with 11 points

No. 17 North Carolina St. 84, Columbia 74: At New York, Cameron Bennerman had a career-high 24 points and picked up the slack for foul-plagued Julius Hodge, leading North Carolina State in the Holiday Festival.

Bennerman had seven points in a 14-1 surge that gave the Wolf-pack (10-1) a 73-59 lead with 4:17 to play. Hodge scored 22 points despite missing considerable time in the second half.

Jeremiah Boswell scored a career-high 23 points for the Lions -3), who were leading 52-50 at one point in the second half

No. 24 Maryland 112, Liberty 68: At College Park, Md., Joh Gilchrist scored a season-high 29 points and Nik Caner-Medley had 20 to lead Maryland to its fourth

straight victory. Ekene Ibekwe had 12 rebounds, and freshman James Gist scored 14 points for the Terrapins (8-2). Larry Blair scored oints Liberty (1-8), which has lost five straight.

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A rarity: SuperSonics, Suns both beaten on same night

For the first two months of the season, the Phoenix Suns and Seattle SuperSonics were the toast of the NBA

For one night, however, neither team was all that special

After combining for only eight losses all season Phoenix and Seattle both lost Tuesday night.

Tony Parker scored a season-high 29 points in 30 minutes, and San Antonio shot 52 percent in a 115-94 victory that ended Phoenix's 11-game winning streak. At Seattle, Allen Iverson scored 34 points, including 13 in the fourth quarter, as the Philadelphia 76ers won their third straight game by defeating the SuperSonics 114-107

They just kicked our butts, said Suns point guard Steve Nash, who scored all 12 of his points in the first quarter. "Maybe that's good for this team, to face a tough challenge like this. .. We can make this a turning point in our season. We can learn that we are not a finished product.

Phoenix's full-throttle offense the league's most productive at nearly 110 points per game was ground to a near-halt by the Spurs' defense - the NBA's stingiest, giving up an average of 85 points per game.

The Suns, with an NBA-best 24-4 record, didn't break 20 points in the second and third quarters, and trailed at one point

San Antonio fell one point shy of its highest point total of the season and held the Suns to just one point more than their season-low.



San Antonio, which led 61-54 at halftime, won the game with a 20-6 run to open the third quarter. Parker scored three baskets inside and Bowen added a pair of three-pointers during the deci-

sive burst. Duncan had 16 points and 12 rebounds and matched his season high with six assists. Malik Rose had 16 points and Manu Ginobili 13 for the Spurs, who limited Phoenix to a season-low 39.7 percent shooting.

Amare Stoudemire scored 37 points for the Suns.

Shawn Marion, averaging 20.2 points, scored only six on 2-for-11 shooting. Aside from Stoudemire (12-for-19), the Phoenix starters went 9-for-40 from the floor.

76ers 114, SuperSonics 107: At Seattle, Iverson shot 13-for-30 and had seven assists as the 76ers beat a Western Conference team for the third straight time after starting the season 0-8 against opponents from the West. They've won seven of their last nine overall

Cavaliers 111, Hawks 102: At Atlanta. LeBron James had 40 points, nine rebounds and seven assists to help the Cavaliers to their third victory in four games.

Jeff McInnis and Zydrunas Ilauskas each scored 20 points for Cleveland, which won its fifth straight against the struggling of his career high set Nov. 24 against Detroit. He went over 30 points for the seventh time this

Lakers 117. Raptors 99: At Los Angeles, Kobe Bryant scored 48 points in 46 minutes after spraining his left shoulder in the opening quarter, and the Lakers had their highest-scoring game of the season.

Los Angeles was coming off a 104-102 overtime loss to Miami on Christmas Day, in which Bryant had 42 points. The Lakers got 18 points from Caron Butler, back from a one-game suspension. Rafer Alston scored 13 points for

Bucks 115, Rockets 87: At Milwaukee, Michael Redd scored 28 points and Desmond Mason added 24 for Milwaukee, which had its highest point total of the

Tracy McGrady led Houston with 20 points, and Bob Sura added 19

Milwaukee limited Yao Ming to 10 points.

Nets 84, Bulls 80: At Chicago Vince Carter scored 25 points to lead New Jersev in his second game since he was traded to the Nets

Kirk Hinrich had 30 points for Chicago.

Mavericks 113, Celtics 94: At Dallas, Dirk Nowitzki had 29 points and 11 rebounds, and Michael Finley added 21 points for the Mavericks. Erick Dampier matched his season-high with 16 points and Jason Terry had a season-high 14 assists.

Nets put Mercer on injured list

The Associated Press

CHICAGO - The New Jersey Nets placed guard Ron Mercer on the injured list Tuesday and signed forward Jerome Moiso.

Mercer played in the games of the season before injuring his



left knee. He underwent success ful arthroscopic surgery on Nov. 15, 2004, and is undergoing rehab. He has averaged 13.9 points in his career.

Moiso has previously played with Boston, New Orleans and

Van Horn on injured list MILWAUKEE - Bucks for-

ward Keith Van Horn was put on the injured list Tuesday because of an ailing right ankle.

He had missed the last 10 games with tendinitis in the ankle and will be out at least two more weeks, Bucks General Manager Larry Harris said.

Van Horn has averaged 17.2 points and 8.2 rebounds in 13 games this season.

NBA scoreboard

Eastern Conference Atlanta 22 .185

Western Conference



Dallas 113, Boston 94 Philadelphia 114, Seattle 107 L.A. Lakers 117, Toronto 99 Wednesday's ga Houston at Cleveland Detroit at Washington Milwaukee at Orlando

Milwaukee at Orianoo Indiana at Charlotte Minnesota at New York Boston at Memphis Phoenix at New Orleans Utah at L.A. Clippers Toronto at Golden State Thursday's g Seattle at Atlanta

Indiana at New Jersey Miami at Detroit San Antonio at Portland Friday's ga Washington at Boston Seattle at Charlotte Sacramento at Utah Philadelphia at Denver San Antonio at L.A. Clipp Milwaukee at Houston

Tuesday Cavaliers 111. Hawks 102

CLEVELAND — James 13-25 11-14 40, Gooden 4-9 3-4 11, Ilgauskas 7-13 6-6 20, McInnis 6-12 6-6 20, Newble 2-4 2-2 6, Snow 2-3 2-2 6, Varejao 3-6 0-0 6, Harris 0-2 0-0 0, Traylor 1-6 0-0 2. Totals 38-80 30-34 111. LANTA — Harrington 11-16 9-11 31, er 8-16 0-2 17, Collier 4-5 1-2 9, Ivey 1-4

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Atlanta
Three-Point Goals—Cleveland 5-9 (James 2-3, McIrnis 2-3, McIrnis 2-3, McIrnis 2-3, McIrnis 2-3, McIrnis 2-3, McIrnis 2-4, Mc

Bucks 115. Rockets 87

HOUSTON — Howard 4-6 0-0 8, McGrady 7-19 3-4 20, Yao 3-6 4-4 10, Barry 0-8 0-0 0, Sura 6-10 7-9 19, Gaines 5-9 0-0 11, Mutombo 0-10-0 0, Taylor 5-12-5-8 15, Padgett 0-12-42, Weatherspoon 1-1 0-0 2, Totals 31-73 21-29

24 0-0 4, Gadzuric 1-3 0-2 2, Redd 8-14 9-12 28, M.Williams 4-5 3-3 11, Fizer 6-8 3-6 15, Pa-chulia 3-9 2-4 8, James 5-10 2-2 13, Gill 1-7 3-3 5, House 2-5 0-0 5, Hamilton 0-1 0-2 0. Totals 43-81 24-37 115.

43-81 4-37 115. 25 16 18 28 – 87 Milwaukee Gals - 102 30 25 – 115 Milwaukee Gals - 102 30 25 – 115 Gals - 102 30 25 –

Spurs 115. Suns 94

Spurs 115, Suns 94
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Three-roint coals. Procents 4.17 Uscobs or 1.3 i have 1 Mahous 1.2 Stoudenire 0-1, Marton 0-2, Richardson 0-2, Stoudenire 0-1, Marton 0-2, Richardson 0-4, San Antonio 6-23 (Bowen 2-7, Horry 1-2, Dudin 0-2), Fouled out.—None. Rebounds. Procents 47 (Marton 8), San Antonio 88 (Dunhon), San Antonio 80 (Dunhon), San Antonio 95 (Dunhon), San Antonio 25 (Duncan, Ginobilli, Olivin 6), Total full—Plocents 2, San Antonio Gentry, San Antonio coach Popovich. A—18,777 (ISSO)

Mavericks 113, Celtics 94

BOSTON — Welsch 6-8 4-4 17, LaFrentz 7-13 2-2 16, Blount 2-5 1-2 5, Payton 3-12 0-0 6, Pierce 6-13 3-7 17, Davis 1-8 0-2 2, Allen 2-4 0-1 4, Jefferson 4-5 1-2 9, Banks 4-7 5-6 14, Mc-Carty 0-2 0-0 0, Perkins 0-2 0-0 0, Reed 1-1 2-4 36-80 18-30 94

Carty 6-19 (1997) and 1997 and

Nets 84, Bulls 80

NEUS 69-5, DUILIS 5017, Jeffer-son 6-18-5-6-17, Colling 2-5-4-4-8, Ridd 1-5-17-son 6-18-5-6-17, Colling 2-5-4-4-8, Ridd 1-5-17-son 6-18-5-6-17, Colling 2-5-4-4-8, Ridd 1-5-17-12-8, L'Smith 5-6-0-4, Dickens 60-6-0-0, Moisto 9-0-6-0-0, Vaugim 6-0-0-0, Totals Journal 6-10-8-8-3, Colling 6-10-8-8-3, Colling 6-10-8-8-3, Colling 6-10-8-8-3, Colling 6-10-8-8-8, Colling 6-10-8-8-8, Colling 6-10-8-8-8, Colling 6-10-8-8-8, Colling 6-10-8-8-8, Colling 6-10-8-8, Colling 6-10-8-8, Colling 6-10-8-8, Colling 6-10-8, Colling 6-10-8,

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76ers 114, SuperSonics 107

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PRIABLEPHA : Boxodals 1.27.4, Thomas 5.9.5 7.15, Dalember 7.3.2.5, Green
1.5.6.7, West 1.5.6.7, W

Lakers 117, Raptors 99

TORONTO - Peterson 4-13 1-2 10, Bosh 4-10 3-5 11, Araujo 4-8 0-9 8, Alston 5-17 2-2 13, EWilliams 4-10 4-4 12, Rose 6-12 0-0 12, Marshall 4-8 0-0 10, Murray 4-9 0-0 10, Bonner 3-4 0-0 6, Palacio 2-8 3-3 7. Totals 40-99 13-16 99.

99. **L.A. LAKERS** — Butler 5-11 6-7 18, Odom 5-9 4-5 15, Mihm 0-1 0-0 0, Bryant 14-26 16-18 48, Atkins 6-12 0-1 14, Jones 3-9 1-2 9, Grant 2-4 2-2 6, Cook 2-9 1-2 7, Brown 0-0 0-0 0. To-tals 37-81 30-37 117.

26 29 27 17- 99 24 35 22 36-117 I A Lakers LA. Lakers
Three-Point Goals—Toronto E-21 (Murray
2-4, Marshall 2-4, Peterson 1-4, Alston 1-6,
Bosh 0-1, Rose 0-2), LA. Lakers 1-32-5 (Ryshall
4-7, Butler 2-2, Cook 2-4, Jones 2-5, Atkins 2-6,
Odom 1-1), Fouled out-None, Rebounds(Odom 1-3), Assists—Foronto 25 (Alston 11),
LA. Lakers 17 (Atkins 7), Todal fouls—Toronto Detensive Three Second, A—18, 297 (18, 297).

Jan. 5 — 10-day contracts may be signed.
Jan. 10 — All player contracts guaranteed

or rest of the season.
Feb. 18-20 - All-Star weekend, Denver.
Feb. 24 — Trading deadline, 3 p.m. EST.
April 29 — Regular season ends.
April 23 — Playoffs begin.
June 7-10 — NSA predraft camp, Chicago.
June 9 — Earliest possible NBA Finals start

date.

June 21 — Early entry draft withdrawal deadline.

June 23 — Latest possible NBA Finals end

ne 28 — NRA Draft. New York.

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Buzzuw modulation that is used in high eard multitary jamming systems. Features-Europea (SiGM Cellust frequencies 80-960 MEZ and 1890-2100 MHz. Mounts on back of front pissenger or drivers seat. 110 Meet operational range and connects directly to 10 MMWV butters under seat or in 110 Meet of appear in other vehicles. Wisshabited to 10 MMWV and the subset of the seat of the se



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New Syracuse AD fires Pasqualoni

SYRACUSE, N.Y. - Syracuse University fired embattled head football coach Paul Pasqualoni on Wednesday, just three weeks after giving him a vote of confidence to return for a 15th season.

Pasqualoni was 107-59-1 and 6.3 in howl games at Syracuse But the Orange struggled to break even the past three years after going 10-3 and finishing 14th in the nation in 2001.

Outgoing athletic director Jake Crouthamel, who hired Pasqualoni to replace Dick MacPherson. gave his embattled head coach a positive evaluation after the Orange upset then-No. 17 Boston College in the season finale That vaulted Syracuse into a four-way tie for the Big East championship and made the Orange eligible to play in the postseason.

Chancellor Nancy Cantor an nounced Dec. 6 that Pasqualoni would return for 2005, but 11 days later the university hired Daryl Gross as its athletic director and the Orange's humbling 51-14 loss to Georgia Tech in the Champs Sports Bowl apparently sealed Pasqualoni's fate

The decision to fire Pasqualoni was made by Gross

Petrino speaks with LSU

MEMPHIS, Tenn. — Louisville football coach Bobby Petrino has met with LSU officials about the Tigers' job but refused to say if he expected further talks There's no offer on the table,"

he said Tuesday.



opened when Nick Saban left for the Miami Dolphins.

Petrino, who called his session with LSU a "preliminary meeting," is in Mem-phis, where the No. 7 Cardinals play No. 10 Boise State in the Liberty Bowl on Friday.

LSU officials received permission from Arkansas to talk to Razorbacks coach Houston Nutt. an Arkansas snokesman said Tues

Police: Vandy football player killed over 'trash talk'

TAMPA Fla - Vanderbilt running back Kwane Doster was shot to death after his friends and a group of other men exchanged trash talk" about their cars, Tampa police said Tuesday.

Police continued to appeal for help in making an arrest in the Sunday morning shooting. Police said they have suspects, but need witnesses who might have seen who fired the fatal shot.

Doster, 21, was shot to death at a sandwich shop after visiting a local club with two friends about 1:30 a.m. Sunday.

While leaving the club, Doster's fiends had a discussion with three other men about their cars, said Tampa police spokesman Joe Durkin. Both groups were driving what Durkin de-scribed as "show" cars, and the arguments centered on whose car



The two groups met again at a stoplight, where they again exchanged words and mean stares. Durkin said. The suspects were riding in an orange Infiniti

Blocks later, Doster and his friends pulled into a sandwich shop. The Infiniti pulled up, one man got out and opened fire with a handgun, Durkin said.

Doster, who was sitting in the back seat of his friend's car, was killed with a single shot. No one else was injured.

San Jose State hires Tomey

SAN JOSE, Calif. - Dick Tomey, the career leader in coaching victories at Arizona and Hawaii, has been hired to revive San Jose State's struggling football program.

A school source, speaking on condition of anonymity, confirmed Wednesday that Tomey was chosen to succeed Fitz Hill who resigned earlier in the month after four losing seasons.

The 66-year-old Tomey currentis the assistant head coach at Texas under Mack Brown, helping to prepare the team for Saturday's Rose Bowl. The Longhorns declined comment through a spokesperson

'Monday Night Football' has lowest ratings ever

NEW YORK - The average national rating for "Monday Night Football" this season was the lowest in the ABC program's 35 years, though it still ranked among the top 10 prime-time shows for the 15th straight sea-

The season average of an 11.0 rating dipped below 2002's 11.4 rating for the lowest ever. It was down 4 percent from last year's 11.5 average, which was the first year since 1994 that the average rating for "MNF" had not dropped. The program ranked seventh in prime time and continued to perform extremely well with male viewers.

"The only thing that matters is beating your competition right now," ABC Sports spokesman Mark Mandel said. "It's doing what it's intended to do and that's beat its competition."

This season was certainly eventful for "Monday Night Football," which drew criticism from the NFL for a steamy opening segment last month with actress Nic ollette Sheridan, from ABC's "Desperate Housewives." jumping into the arms of Eagles receiver Terrell Owens

"Monday Night Football" is heading into the final year of its contract with the NFL. The exclusive negotiating period for ABC and its broadcast partner ESPN, which has the Sunday night game, extends for nearly another year. But there's been speculation that other networks might challenge for the Sunday night and Monday night packages



NFL injury update

ies to prominent NFL players, fol-by team's prognosis. (See Fri-edition for complete injury report rovided by the league): Cowboys: RB Richie Anderson (neck) ut for Sunday. out for Sunday.

Steelers: CB Peshea Townsend (hand)
out for Sunday: RB Jerome Betts
(ankle), doubtful: LB Jerome Betts
(groin) doubtful: RB Duce Staley (hamstring) questionable; LB Kendrelli Bell
(groin) questionable

Last month, the NFL agreed to \$8 billion in extensions with Fox and CBS to televise Sunday afternoon games for six more years. The deals also would allow the league to show better matchups

late in the season in prime time. **Broncos put RB Hearst** on injured reserve

DENVER - The Denver Broncos placed running back Garrison Hearst on injured reserve Tuesday with a broken left hand

Hearst, a 12-year veteran. wo-time Pro Bowler and 2001 NFL Comeback Player of the Year, was signed as a free agent in the offseason. He played be-hind Reuben Droughns and Tatum Bell, and finished the season with 20 carries for 81 yards.

To replace Hearst, the Broncos signed Johnathan Reese, who was with the New York Jets before they released him in September. Reese played at Columbia University in New York and was on the Jets' practice squad for most of the 2003 season.

Judge refuses to dismiss charges in BALCO case

SAN FRANCISCO - The judge in a steroids distribution case that has implicated several elite athletes refused Tuesday to dismiss charges against three defendants. but ruled they may argue that statements given to investigators were illegally coerced.
Those statements implicated

several sports stars as drug users including baseball sluggers
Barry Bonds, Jason Giambi and Gary Sheffield, and sprinters Marion Jones and Tim Montgomery. No athlete has been charged. Judge Susan Illston said there's

a substantial dispute between prosecutors and the three ac-Victor Conte, men -James Valente and Greg Anderson - over whether they were in custody when they were initially interrogated by investigators. The questioning took place dur-

ing Sept. 3, 2003, raids at the Bay Area Laboratory Co-Operative the lab headed by Conte - and the home of Anderson, Bonds' personal trainer. Valente is a lab vice president. A fourth defendant. track coach Remi Korchemny. was not involved in Tuesday's rul-If the judge finds the men were

under arrest during the raids, as

Sports briefs

then defense attorneys will argue the statements cannot be used against them because their clients were denied the right to consult lawyers.

dants allege,

Prosecutors argue the defendants were free to leave during the questioning.

Yankees finalize \$21 million deal with Wright NEW YORK - Free agent

Jaret Wright and the New York Yankees finalized a \$21 million, three-year contract Wednesday, announcing the deal on the pitcher's 29th birthday.
Wright and the Yankees

reached a preliminary agreement Since losing to Boston in the AL

championship series. New York also has added free-agent pitcher Carl Pavano to the rotation and tried to work out a trade for Arizona ace Randy Johnson.

Wright was 15-8 with a 3.28 ERA for Atlanta last season, then lost both of his starts in the first round of the playoffs against Houston. The right-hander is 52-45 with a 5.09 ERA in a career that began in 1997 with Cleveland shoulder trouble

Ray sues NHLPA, seeking lockout compensation

BUFFALO, N.Y. - Veteran tough guy Rob Ray sued the NHL Players Association, claiming he has been shut out of the union's lockout compensation fund as punishment because he said in October he would return to the ice if the NHL used replacement

Ray spent most of last season working as a TV broadcaster with his former team, the Buffalo Sabres, before signing with Ottawa in February. He played six games with the Senators, and was on the team's roster when it was eliminated by Toronto in the first round of last year's playoffs.

The 15-year NHL veteran is an unrestricted free agent. He said Tuesday he was notified early last month that an NHLPA committee ruled he was not eligible for compensation.

NHLPA spokesman Jonathan Weatherdon declined comment Tuesday on Ray's suit, which was filed in New York Supreme Court in Buffalo.

The lockout entered its 104th day on Tuesday. Last month, the NHLPA began paying players

and nearly ended because of \$10,000 a month while they are out of work.

Vazquez beats Simonyar to retain IBF ir. feather title

EL CAJON, Calif. - Israel Vazquez handed top-ranked contender Artyom Simonyan his first defeat and retained his IBF jun ior featherweight championship with a fifth-round knockout Tuesday night.

Vazquez is 37-3 with 28 knockouts. Simonyan slipped to 14-1-1 with seven KOs.

Austrian downhiller Grugger gets first World Cup win

BORMIO, Italy - Austrian downhiller Johann Grugger won his first World Cup race Wednesday on the course that will host the uncoming world championwhile overall Cup leader Bode Miller came in 14th

Grugger finished in 1 minute. 55.77 seconds on the Stelvio, one of the most physically demanding

courses on the World Cup circuit Austrian Michael Walchhofer. the reigning downhill world champion, was 0.24 seconds behind in second and countryman Fritz Strobl, the Olympic gold medalist, was third.

Also Wednesday, in Semmer-ing, Austria, Marlies Schild won

for the second time in as many days, capturing a night slalom to go along with her World Cup slalom victory on Tuesday.

Schild won in a combined time of 1 minute 35.49 seconds to the delight of 15,000 fellow Austrians on the Hirschenkogel course

Schild beat Croat Janica Kostelic by 1.04 seconds, who was followed by overall World Cup leader Tanja Poutjainen of Finland in



Bailey's big test features meeting with Manning

BY EDDIE PELLS The Associated Press

DENVER - A humiliating loss to Indianapolis in the playoffs last season made it clear the Denver Broncos had to change something.

That change is wearing No. 24 this season, and his name is Champ Bailey.

On Sunday, the Broncos play the Colts again in a game they need to win to make it back to the playoffs. It may also serve as the definitive test on whether Denver really got what it needed when it traded star tailback Clinton Portis for the shutdown cornerback.

"I wasn't here last year, and what happened last year doesn't concern me," said Bailey, who has con-sistently shirked discussion of who won and lost in the trade. "All I know is what we've got ahead of us. All I can worry about is what we've got to do to win this week

Bailey's impact has been largely debated in Denver and around the league this season

He has three interceptions - not a high number for a cornerback — and the Broncos pass defense has staved steady, ranked sixth in the league this vear and last.

But almost everyone agrees statistics don't tell the entire story with a cornerback, especially a "shutdown" corner like Bailey, who doesn't get the ball thrown his way as much as most corners

Bailey made his fifth straight Pro Bowl and started every game

He was most visible when he got beat, and that happened on more than a few occasions - by Cincinnati's Chad Johnson, by Oakland's Jerry Porter, and by Kansas City's Eddie Kennison

For the most part, though, he has done his job, limiting quarterbacks' choices by shutting off one side of the field. He has also been an exceptional run defender, something many top corners aren't known for.

'Obviously, Champ Bailey is a guy who can cover any number of guys," Colts quarterback Peyton Manning said. "He can play in the slot. He follows the best receivers.

Meanwhile, Portis has run for 1,315 yards and five touchdowns for Washington. The Broncos have found adequate replacements in Reuben Droughns and Tatum Bell, who was selected with the second-round draft pick the Broncos also received in the trade

But Denver has struggled on third-and-short situations this season and ranks 30th in the league in scoring touchdowns inside the opponent's 20-yard line Portis ran for 14 scores last year, and some wonder if his absence has hurt Denver's efficiency

The bottom line is wins and losses, and the Broncos are 9-6. A win over Indianapolis would give them 10 matching last year's total — and a first-round playoff game on the road, just like last year.

The Broncos finished with the fourth-ranked de-



Denver's Champ Bailey (24), defending San Diego's Eric Parker, has three interceptions this season but has been an effective shutdown cornerback. Bailey and a second-round draft pick were traded to Denver in the offseason for running back Clinton Portis.

fense last season, but the good numbers didn't hide the flaws, most of which came to the surface in the 41-10 playoff loss at Indianapolis.

Manning threw for 377 yards and five touchdowns The most embarrassing moment came early, when Al Wilson, Kenoy Kennedy, Kelly Herndon and Lenny Walls watched Marvin Harrison make a catch and fall to the ground, but never touched him, Harrison stood up and ran for a touchdown and a 14-3 lead.

"We weren't up for that game, I don't know why Kennedy said, "We didn't play well in that last game and it was worse because it was the playoffs Since the Colts have clinched the third seed in the

AFC and Manning threw his 49th touchdown last week to set the NFL record. Indy coach Tony Dungy has already decided Manning and the starters won't play the entire game Sunday.

If the Broncos win, they could travel to Indy for a rematch next week in the first round of the playoffs. One way or another, it seems Bailey is destined to get his chance against Manning.

"He's done things you can only imagine a quarterback doing," Bailey said. "One of his goals was to throw for 40 touchdowns and he did that a few weeks ago. That's amazing.

NFL statistics

Brees, S.D. Green, K.C. Roethlich

Individual leaders

Week 16 Culpepper, N McNabb, Phi. Griese, T.B. Bulger, St.L er. Pit. Roethlisberger, I Pennington, NYJ Brady, N.E. Volek, Ten. Leftwich, Jac. Carr, Hou. Plummer, Den. 334 221 444 266 329 202 413 252 2492 3466 2311 2792 Favre, G.B.

NFC

Individual leaders

Week 16

Alexander, Sea Barber, NYG Portis, Was.

Portis, Was. Green, G.B. Jones, Det. Dunn, Atl. McAllister, N.O. Vick, Atl. Pittman, T.B. E. Smith, Ariz

rn. N.O. Horn, N.O. Muhammad, Car. Holt, St.L Coles, Was. Walker, G.B. Bruce, St.L Jackson, Sea. Driver, G.B. Witten, Dal.

E. Johnson, S.F.

Yds 1324

1310 1256 913 1300 51 75t 45 79t 56 56t

1160

7ds 316 457

227 6.7

528 641 23.0 22.9

12

Avg 27.4 26.6 25.4 25.0

23.9 23.5 23.1 23.1

10.1

87 87 87 86 15.1 14.4 10.5

Avg LG TD 4.8 44 15 4.8 72t 12 3.8 64t 5 4.5 90t 7 4.8 74 5 4.1 60 9 3.9 28 8 7.6 58 3 4.3 78t 7 3.6 29t 9

LG 57

Avg 44.6 44.4 44.0

43.3 43.2 43.0 42.3 41.5

Yds 1550 1544 1519 LG TD 40 9 25t 12 44 11 52 9 42 17 46 2 51t 6 44 12 52 6 41 11 James, Ind. Martin, NYJ Dillon, N.E. Dillon, N.E.
R. Johnson, Cin.
Tomlinson, S.D.
Taylor, Jac.
Droughns, Den.
Davis, Hou.
Brown, Ten.
McGahee, Buf. 333 1355 4.1 3.9 4.7 4.5 3.8 4.9 333 260 260 284 220 266 1335 1224 1164 1077 1067 1049

No 92 Mason, Ten Mason, Ten.
C. Johnson, Cin.
Gonzalez, K.C.
Moulds, Buf.
Harrison, Ind.
Gates, S.D.
Bennett, Ten.
Ward, Pit.
Johnson, Hou 1207 1114 1006 1080 964 1197 13.4 12.7 12.0 13.3 53t 32 49 59 90 88 84 81 81 78 78 77 74 14 13 10 4 6 11 11.9 15.3 12.7 14.7

1120 15.1

Lechler, Oak Smith, Ind. Scifres, S.D. Scifres, S.D. Moorman, Buf. Hentrich, Ten. Gardocki, Pit. Hanson, Jac. Jo. Miller, N.E. Larson, Cin. Turk, Mia.

Northcutt, Cle. Welker, S.D.-Mia. Hall, K.C. Sams, Bal. Smith, Den. Lewis, Jac. Clements, Buf. Parker, S.D. Moses, Hou.

McGee, Buf. Hall, K.C. Randle El, Pit. B. Johnson, N.E. Dwight, S.D. Rhodes, Ind. McAddley, Ten. Russell, Cin.

Welker, S.D.-Mia. Moses, Hou.

Tomlinson, S.D.

Wayne, Ind.

Yds 3171 2050 2818 47.3 44.6 43.4 Sauerbrun, Ca Tupa, Was. Berger, N.O. Landeta, St.L Maynard, Chi. Player, Ariz Bidwell, T.B. 43.1 43.0 42.8 42.7 42.3 42.2 No 34 40 22 53 21 23 34 25 35 44 71

Drummond, Det. Rossum, Atl. Lewis, N.O. Frazier, Dal. McQuarters, Chi. Burleson, Min. Battle, S.F. Thrash, Was. Chatman, G.B. 10.5 225 8.3 Jones, NYG 1235 1633 527 966 26.8 25.9 25.1 24.8 Ponder, NYG Drummond, Det. Cox, T.B. Ferguson, G.B. Ferguson, Lewis, N.O Lee, Dal.

46 63 21 1222 1024 769 850 Broussard, Car. Reed, Phi. 22.6 Betts, Was 54 52 1205 1155 22.3 22.2 Pts 108 90 17 14 Alexander, Sea. Muhammad, Car.

Harrison, Ind. Martin, NYJ Bettis, Pit. 84 84 78 12 13 Davis, Hou. Gates, S.D. Dillon, N.E. McGahee, Buf. 12 0 11 11 78 78 74 66 66 Wayne, Ind. 11 31-33

Pts 138 117 114 114 Vinatieri, N.E. vinatieri, N.E. Vanderjagt, Ind. Elam, Den. Graham, Cin. Lindell, Buf. Kaeding, S.D. Reed, Pit. 20-25 25-30 26-29 42-42 51-52 38-38 23-26 19-24 23-28 Stover, Bal. Tynes, K.C. Janikowski, Oak. 105 104 100

Akers, Phi. Longwell, G.B. J. Brown, Sea. Carney, N.O.

Green Bay St. Louis

Seattle Philadelphia

Carolina New Orleans

Atlanta Tampa Bay

OFFENSE

Muhammad, () Owens, Phi. Barber, NYG Moss, Min. Walker, G.B. Burleson, Min. Horn, N.O. Pittman, T.B. Driver, G.B. 84 78 72 66 62 62 60 56 FG 40-41 26-30 44-44 23-27 36-36 23-25 35-35 22-26 44-44 17-21 29-29 22-28 27-27 22-26 **Team statistics**

358.7 351.7 327.0 322.2 322.0

Case: Defense, kicking game favor Pats CASE, FROM BACK PAGE Seymour and Willie McGinest. AFC now that Eagles receiver Ter-

and wins and wins, with poise, intelligence and resourcefulness Brady reads defenses as well as

any quarterback, and if an opponent doesn't get pressure on him. he becomes a surgeon.

■ The defense devised by coach Bill Belichick and coordinator Romeo Crennel is complex. and it keeps evolving. Yet the players have such a strong grasp of it that they rarely make mistakes. All the while they are befuddling opponents the way they did Jets quarterback Chad Pennington last Sunday.

The key defenders are linebackers Mike Vrabel, Tedy Bruschi and Ted Johnson, and linemen

Their versatility and command of the intricate schemes allows Belichick/Crennel to spring surprises on offenses

■ Adam Vinatieri doesn't miss big kicks. He's having another superb season and with two Super Bowl-winning kicks in his ré sumé, does anyone think he won't come through when needed?

the Patriots have What achieved this year is just as impressive as their accomplishments in 2001 or 2003 because of the epidemic of injuries and a difficult schedule.

The road to Jacksonville for the Super Bowl will be exceptionally difficult because the four best teams in the league are in the

rell Owens is sidelined New England might have to beat Manning and the high-powered Colts and then the rugged Steelers just to get to the Super Bowl. Or the very worthy Chargers could sneak into the AFC championship game.

But New England has frustrat-

ed Manning and the Colts in their past two meetings, both in Fox-boro, where the next one would occur

And a trip to Pittsburgh in the AFC title game was the route they took in 2001.

You play with what you've got," Brady said, "and teams that deal with it and come through are the best teams

Until proven otherwise, that's the Patriots.

Team statistics OFFENSE

186.6 202.7 225.9 231.7

Pass 297.1 268.9 250.7 121.2 147.9 141.3 Denver New England San Diego Tennessee New York Jets Pittsburgh Houston Oakland 354.5 345.9 345.0 340.9 328.1 326.0 324.8 130.7 136.5 118.4 147.2 153.8 115.0 Cincinnati Jacksonville Buffalo 322.1 317.8 294.9

ttsburah
uffalo
enver
ew York Jets
altimore
iami
ew England
cksonville
an Diego
eveland
ncinnati

Rush 80.2 96.5 98.5 101.3 105.6 140.8 95.8 108.1 82.5 145.2 132.1 113.7 120.9 339.6 352.7

New York Giants Arizona San Francisco Washington Tampa Bay Philadelphia New York Giants Arizona Atlanta Chicago Carolina

San Francisco

134.1 103.9 102.4 96.1 108.1 164.5 224.6 247.8 224.6 226.1 213.9 150.8 219.1 95.1 120.4 104.1 87.6 111.6 109.9 100.9 321.3 326.1 330.3 111.1 121.4 119.5 121.8 336.7 338.4

283.2 274.3 254.5

SPORTS



In New Year's Day bowls. sixth-ranked Texas has plenty at stake, Page 26

A case for the defense

Experienced, playmaking Pats poised to repeat

BY BARRY WILNER The Associated Press

They don't have the league's best record and they won't have home-field advantage throughout

Analysis

Their secondary is banged up so badly that an undrafted rookie, a linebacker and a wide re-

ceiver have played significant roles in recent games. There are concerns about a no-name offensive line, and their best defensive lineman. Richard Seymour.

injured his foot on Sunday Are the New England Patriots

done? Hardly. Indeed, the Patriots are in better shape offensively to win the Super Bowl than they were last season. And with all the adversity on defense, they've discovered that nearly every lineman and linebacker and back on the roster can contribute.

"Guys make plays," says strong safety Rodney Harrison, the glue of the defense. "There is more focus on what they have to do when they get on the field. They look around and see how every one is making plays and they do it. too.

They did it against the Jets last weekend to secure a first-week bye, which they'll need to heal. And that victory came after an uncharacteristic meltdown in Miami the previous Monday - a loss that cost them a shot to stay in Foxboro for the entire AFC playoffs, unless Pittsburgh loses its first postseason game.

"This is a team with a lot of mental toughness that battles and has a lot of strong character, quarterback Tom Brady said. "and when you have that, you can feel proud at the end of the day."

The Patriots have felt proud while carrying the Vince Lombardi Trophy two of the past three years. They not only are capable of doing it again, but should be considered nothing less than co-favorites with the Steelers. Here's why:

■ Corey Dillon gives New England a running threat it hasn't had since Curtis Martin left for the Jets in 1998. Sure, Antowain



Corey Dillon (28), who has rushed for a team-record 1,519 yards this season, has given New England the dependable running game it has lacked in recent seasons, diversifying the team's potent offense.



Adam Vinatieri (4) has made two last-second, game-winning kicks in the Super Bowl, has made 31 of 33 field goal attempts this season and has converted 84 nercent of his field goals the past four seasons (107 of 127).

Smith was a key contributor in the two Super Bowl wins, but with Dillon the Patriots can play any style on offense. Dillon, who has set a team record with 1,519 yards rushing, is powerful and has a burst, He's also a workhorse.

■ Brady's receiving corps is



Fifth-year pro Tom Brady continues to enhance his reputation as a winner who picks apart defenses. Since becoming a starter in 2001, he has averaged 3,425 passing yards and 23.7 touchdown passes per season.

even deeper than last year. One week, he'll turn to veteran Trov Brown - when Brown is not spending most of his time as a fill-in cornerback. Another week, it's Deion Branch Or David Giv-

ens. Or one of the tight ends. "It doesn't really matter which



is the architect of a defense that ranked first in the NFL in points allowed last season (14.9 per game) and is sixth this year (16.9) despite a rash of injuries that has sidelined several starters

Patriots head coach Bill Belichick

one is in there, I have confidence in all of them," Brady says. "They're all playmakers." ■ So is Brady, who never will pile up the kind of numbers Pey-

ton Manning or Daunte Culpepper have this year. But he wins



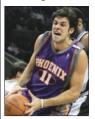
Upset specialist Gonzaga topples third-ranked Oklahoma State

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Oregon State extends **Notre Dame's** bowl-game losing streak to seven

Page 27



Spurs. Sixers defeat league heavyweights Suns and Sonics

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